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Introduction

Welcome to this course in **Contextual Studies**, which is one of the modules in both the Higher Certificate and Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training. This course is designed to help you gain a basic understanding of the community of adult basic education and training, its socio-political and geographical contexts, and the way in which adult basic education and training interrelates with gender, health and workplace issues.

The module is an introductory module (level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)) and will examine some of the contextual factors that must be taken into account in the practical work of an entry-level adult basic education and training practitioner.

In this Introduction we shall outline the contents of the **Contextual Studies** module. Here you will find basic information about:

- the aims of the module
- the learning outcomes of the module
- the units that make up the module
- the material in the study guide and the readings
- sources of additional information
- tutorial support
- assignments and assessment
- study expectations

Aims of the module

The aim of this module is to help you gain a basic understanding of the community of adult basic education and training, its socio-political and geographical contexts, and the way in which adult basic education and training interrelates with gender, health and workplace issues. You will gain a basic knowledge of the major political and socioeconomic processes and institutions that influence adult basic education and training. This knowledge will help you to implement literacy, numeracy and adult basic education and training learning programmes that are responsive to the contextual issues and risks that impact on the communities and workplaces where such education and training occur.

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes provided below tell you what you are expected to be able to do after you have studied this module (ie the **results**). The learning outcomes tell you what you are expected to know and what you should be able to do. These learning outcomes are based on the assumption that you will read and study this study guide, do the recommended study activities, and complete all the assignments.

By the end of the module, you should be able to do the following:

(1) Explain and describe adult basic education and training in the South African context.
(2) Explain and describe the various types of communities that exist in South Africa.
(3) Define the concept of "development".
(4) Explain the interaction between education and health.
(5) Explain and describe the interaction between gender and education.
(6) Explain the situation of people at work and the influence of the economy on adult basic education and training.

The module units

The **Contextual Studies** module consists of the following topic areas (six units of printed material):

Unit	Title	Topics covered
1	What is the context of adult basic education and training?	What is "context"? What is adult basic education and training? The South African adult education context The National Qualifications Framework and standards Trends in literacy and adult basic education and training
2	What types of communities exist in South Africa?	The different types of communities The characteristics of urban and rural communities Communities and youth How different communities respond to educational interventions
3	What is development?	How do we define development? Different ways of viewing development How can development take place in rural and urban areas? What is the role of adult basic education and training in development?

Unit	Title	Topics covered
4	What is the relationship between education and health?	How does education influence health in rural and urban areas and the workplace? What kinds of health education can be provided through literacy and adult basic education and training? What are some of the basic HIV and AIDS health education issues?
5	How does gender influence education?	What do we mean by gender? What gender associated barriers make it difficult for men and women to participate in education? What are the specific advantages of educating women?
6	What is the relationship between work, the economy and ABET?	What problems at work can be changed by education? What are the barriers that prevent people at work from participating in adult basic education and training? What do typical industry adult basic education and training programmes do? How can adult basic education and training help reduce unemployment?

Knowing something about these matters is important if we are going to be effective adult educators, trainers or development workers. We will therefore discuss some of the contextual forces that influence how adults live, work and learn and participate in adult education. If you know what these contextual forces are, as an educator you will be able to design and deliver adult education activities that are more sensitive and more relevant.

In unit 1 we will begin by looking at some of the most important features of adult basic education and training. We will then look at the different types of communities that people come from and in which they live and work. We will then look at the different concepts of development (of people and communities). Finally, we shall discuss three sets of contextual issues to see how these influence adult basic education and training – health, gender and the workplace.

The study guide material and readings

Instruction is given in this module in two ways:

(1) Through the content of the study guide itself (which includes the study material and specific readings).
(2) By interacting with a tutorial group (if you can attend one).

Units

The printed course material for the Contextual Studies module is divided into six units. Each unit covers topics related to one of the learning outcomes.

What is in each unit?

Each unit includes the following:

- Aims
- Learning outcomes
- Content material
- Activities
- Readings
- Further reading

Aims

These are general statements about what you will learn in the unit.

Learning outcomes

These are specific statements about what you will be able to do when you have worked through the unit and completed the course activities related to the unit.

Content (study material)

This is the material you will be studying. Other supporting materials, mainly readings, may also be used.

Activities

Included in the study material will be a number of activities. These tasks should help you check your own understanding of the material. The activities will include questions, exercises, self-tests and ideas you need to think and write about.

Readings

At the end of some of the units you may find a reading or readings.

Further reading

A list of further readings will be provided near the end of each unit. These readings can be found in textbooks, books, journal articles and other publications and on the internet. You will have to find these readings yourself. In nearly all cases the books and journals are available from Unisa's Library; some are available at Unisa's regional centres.

How much time must I spend on each unit?

This module is rated at 12 credits. This means that it will take you about 120 hours to complete your study of this module.

This means that you must plan to spend time

- reading the materials
- engaging in activities as you read, and attending tutorials
- writing assignments, and preparing for and writing the examination

We recommend that you plan your study schedule as follows:

- Read through this introduction and the six units: 40 hours (about 6 hours for each module)
- Complete the activities and attend tutorials: 40 hours
- Write assignments: 20 hours (this includes preparation, reading, writing and careful editing)
- Prepare for and write the examination: 20 hours

Sources of additional information

Most of the basic information you need for the Contextual Studies module is either included in this study guide or in the tutorial sessions – or it is available in the tutorial letter you received as part of your study package.

What other information do you need?

Further reading

You will be able to obtain additional information from recommended books or the journal articles listed in the “Further reading” section at the end of each unit. These are available from the Library.

The internet

Another primary source of information is the internet or World Wide Web. Computer facilities are available at the university.

Your fellow students

Studying by yourself can be a lonely experience. If possible, make contact with your fellow students (either informally, or by setting up a study group, or by joining a Unisa tutorial group). Other students are always a good source of support and information.

Support from the module coordinator

The module coordinator is another source of support. You are welcome to make appointments to see the coordinator and you can also communicate with him or her by letter, telephone, fax or e-mail (details are given in the tutorial letter).

Assignments and assessment

What is going to be assessed?

You will be assessed on the basis of your assignments and the examination.

Assignments

This module includes **two compulsory** assignments. You will not be allowed to write the examination if you do not submit the first assignment.

Each written assignment has a due date and must be sent in by that date. The first assignment has to be submitted in order to gain entrance to the examination. The second assignment contributes 10% of your final mark.

Examination

This will be written at one of the recognised Unisa examination centres. The examination will last two hours.

Things to remember about assessment

Remember: you need to be able to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning outcomes of this course. This is what we will be assessing.

You will need to:

- show that you have a knowledge of the current contexts of adult learning (by what you write in your assignments and examination answers)
- show that you have the skills needed to be able to think and plan how you would use your knowledge of these contextual forces practically in your education and training activities
- show that your knowledge of the contexts of adult learning is meaningful to you personally (ie the right attitude) and that you can use your skills effectively when working with adults in these contexts

Please do not make the mistake of doing the following:

- Copying from the study guide and learning by rote (this means learning words, texts or facts "off by heart" without understanding their meaning).
- If you simply write what is in the study material you will fail both the assignments and the examination.
- Rejecting your own experience. We are very interested in your experiences, ideas, feelings and activities – simply because you are an adult learner yourself! You will do well in the assignments and the examination if you combine what you have learnt from the study material with your own carefully thought-out ideas. You will get good marks if you show us that you can use what you have learnt from experience and from your studies.

Study expectations

To succeed in this module will require that you spend a considerable number of study hours reading and writing. The module was written on the assumption that you have a school grade 12 level competence in the language of instruction and in reading and writing skills. It is also assumed that you can learn from predominantly written material and that you can find, analyse and evaluate information relevant to the learning programme. We expect you to spend time carefully reading and studying the course material and readings provided. Finally, of course, we expect you to do the assignments and prepare for the examinations.

STUDY UNIT 1

What is the context of adult basic education and training?

INTRODUCTION

Adult educators are continually challenged by the variety of situations they face – each of which requires a different educational response. How each educator responds depends on her or his ability to interpret correctly the particular situation. This interpretation partly depends on the educator's ability to understand or "read" the situation in relation to its broader context.

Contexts are seldom straightforward. They are usually the result of the interplay of a wide range of factors. At one level, adult education occurs within a broad and unfolding historical context and our actions as adult educators will be guided by what has happened previously. More specifically, the relevant context may concern the lives of the learners, or the particular course or learning area, or perhaps the educational institution or organisation that is teaching the adult education programme. Also, of course, certain contexts may be more influential than others.

In this unit we will start by precisely defining what we mean by "context". We will then provide you with some guidance on how to read (ie interpret) a context. The last part of the unit provides a broad summary of the contemporary contexts within which adult basic education and training occurs in South Africa in the first part of the 21st century.

AIMS OF THE UNIT

This unit has three aims:

- to develop your general understanding of the concept of "context"
- to familiarise you with the main features of the South African adult education context (past and present)
- to help you develop the awareness and skills you need to be able to understand any context that you may encounter in the future

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain and describe the meaning of adult basic education and training in the South African context.

You will demonstrate that you can do this by

- giving a written definition of the meaning of the concept "context"
- identifying the essential factors of any given context
- locating the establishment of adult basic education and training policies and systems in their historical and economic context
- providing a simple but coherent interpretation of the broad South African adult education context
- providing a simple description of the context of any South African adult basic education situation
- naming the main adult basic education and training policy documents
- explaining the main features of the National Qualifications Framework and standards
- describing major new policy trends related to literacy and adult basic education and training

WHAT IS "CONTEXT"?

The key word in the title of this unit is the word "context". "Context" is a word frequently used in education and development and a word that has acquired a rather general meaning. It is worth examining this word in order to understand its various meanings.

Let us first start with part of the word "context" – the word "text". Text literally means the words or sentences which form a piece of writing. This piece of writing might be a book, or a poem – anything that is written. In its original sense, the word "text" referred to an original piece of writing.

Context, by contrast, refers to the situation within which the text is placed and which provides us with a framework for understanding the text. So the context is the part which comes before and after any particular text and which helps us to decide on the true meaning of the text.

You can see from this brief explanation that the terms "text" and "context" come from the study of literature. The way in which the term "context" is now used in education, development, politics and other fields has developed from this original literary sense.

You have probably heard public figures such as politicians complaining that their words have been taken "out of context". By this they mean that, while someone may be reporting accurately the actual words they used, the true meaning of those words has been distorted because the context in which those words were spoken or written is not provided. We can illustrate this point quite well by considering a photograph. The part of the photograph we look at cannot be properly understood without reference to the photograph as a whole or, in other words, without reference to the context.

Look at the following photograph and then interpret what is happening in the photograph.

When you have decided what you think this photograph means, take a look at the whole photograph at the top of the next page. You will almost certainly find that your interpretation was different from the true situation shown in the complete photograph – that is, when you saw the part of the photograph in its larger context (which includes the additional information provided by the caption).

Schoolchildren prepare to defy the state forces and start an illegal march through Pietermaritzburg on 21 September 1989 as part of the anti-apartheid defiance campaign of that time. The broader context was that of a country about to enter a transition to non-racial democracy – a period that was officially announced in February 1990.

We can now look at an example related to adult education to make this discussion more real. Consider this module, which you are now studying within the Higher Certificate or Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training programme. Given what we said earlier on about the meaning of the words "text" and "context", we could consider the whole module and programme as the "text". The "context" would be the various aspects of the real-life situation in which the programme is being taught.

There are many situational contexts which we could identify. First, there is the institutional location which we might refer to as "the university context" (Unisa); second, there is the current context of adult education practice in South Africa, which we might refer to as "the contemporary adult educational context"; third, there is the more general context of education and training; fourth, there is the context of social and political development in South Africa; fifth, there is the historical context; sixth, there is the international context of adult education etc. All these are part of the situational context of the module and programme.

The context which you choose to look at most carefully depends very much on the perspective from which you are trying to understand your programme of studies. Someone working for a

development agency would probably view the module and programme in relation to the context of development; a university finance officer may view the module primarily in terms of whether it is eligible for a government subsidy; someone with an interest in history may seek to understand it in relation to the history of education in South Africa.

ACTIVITY 1

Choose any educational event with which you are closely associated – a workshop or training event you have run or attended in the last six months would be ideal. Consider this as the "text".

Now write down all the different contexts which you think relate to this event. Do this as you would a "brainstorm" – that is, without stopping to think whether any context which you identify is valid or not. Simply write down ideas as they occur to you.

From the list which you have generated choose the two contexts which you consider to be most significant from your point of view as an educator.

Now write a short paragraph explaining why these are important contexts for you as an adult educator.

Reading and interpreting contexts

This unit is about the context of adult basic education and training in South Africa. In this case, we can describe what the context actually is.

However, this may lead us to think that context is something fixed and which can be taught. In fact, contexts are always changing. We have to continually monitor contexts as they change. What we understand as the context this year is not the same as it was last year and nor will it be the same next year. History, which influences context, is itself always changing. Moreover, contexts are rarely, if ever, simple.

Because contexts are complex we have to learn to "read" them. An important aim of this unit is to help you develop the understanding and skill you need to read a context.

In fact, this is by no means as difficult as it sounds. All human beings are skilled in reading the context of their daily social interactions and making judgements about what action is, and is not, possible in a certain context.

Adult educators encounter many different situations in which they are required to act. For adult educators in particular, reading the context is a key skill that they need to consciously work on. A proper understanding of context helps you to determine the appropriate way to act in any particular situation.

The following discussion of the historical and contemporary contexts of education will give you a general understanding of the context of adult basic education and training in South Africa. To develop your skill in reading contexts, you should pay particular attention to the analysis of the events and how they link together – this will enable you to construct the context and see how contexts have certain trends. This is part of "making sense" of the context of an event.

ACTIVITY 2

- Write down all the factors that you think would be important in any literacy or adult basic education context. Do this in a brainstorming fashion – that is, simply write down ideas as they occur to you.
- Now draw up a list of significant roleplayers and stakeholders that you are likely to encounter in any literacy or adult education situation.
- Now review your first list (the list of factors) for each of the roleplayers and reflect on how the factors you listed in 1 will influence these roleplayers/stakeholders.

Note: A distinction is sometimes made in education and other fields between stakeholders (institutions or organisations who represent large constituencies (eg organised labour, women, businesses, teachers, churches, etc), which have a direct or indirect interest in the matter under discussion) and roleplayers (institutions or organisations or individuals who play a direct active role in the matter under discussion [eg direct providers of educational services]).

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONTEXT

Before we discuss the context of South African adult basic education and training, it will be helpful to get some idea of the factors that influence a context. From Activity 2 you will have generated a list of your own and you might like to compare your list with the factors which we identify and discuss here. This is not a full list – the number of all the possible factors is huge – but is simply an attempt to name some of the most significant factors in any context.

Social, economic and political factors

All educational contexts are influenced by a variety of social, economic and political factors. These are, if you like, the "bigger forces" in any society. South Africa is a particularly good example of this. Today we live in a post-apartheid South Africa, a society that is significantly different from either colonial or apartheid South Africa – this has a huge influence on South African politics, economics and society generally. Is the economy today essentially based on agriculture, mining or industry? Is this a time of depression or of economic growth? Is there high unemployment or a shortage of skilled labour? Finally, at this general level we need some sense of the social conditions that prevail in South Africa. What, for example, are the social divisions today – racial, class, language? What is the level of general education? Is this a time of relative social stability or of social unrest? There are a multitude of factors which might be relevant at this very general level and the better you are able to grasp and integrate these into your thinking, the better will be your interpretation of the context. It is also important to be able to understand these factors in their historical perspective. The socio-political-economic conditions in any context arise from previous contexts and influence future contexts.

Factors relating to adult basic education

At a more specific level (as far as adult basic education is concerned) there will be a number of unique factors influencing the context. These will include the framework of government policy, social goals and ideological perspectives, as well as the stakeholders and roleplayers themselves.

Framework

What is the framework for the provision of adult basic education? Is there an adult basic education and training system and, if so, how well does it work? At any time an important issue in the context must be an understanding of the pattern of provision – what provision is being made, by who, how it is coordinated or not coordinated, who funds it, etc.

Policy

Policy is an important factor here. To "read the context" one must understand the prevailing policy (even if it is not stated in policy documents, but can only be implied from the actions of the players).

Social goals and ideological perspectives

What are the social goals of the roleplayers and stakeholders? What ideology (the general set of beliefs about how the human world works), what agenda, drives people's interest and activity in adult basic education?

Governance

How are adult education activities and programmes and institutions governed? Does the state dominate the adult basic education field or are a wide range of institutions involved in the governance of adult education in South Africa?

Stakeholders and roleplayers

There are many stakeholders in adult basic education: government, trade unions, churches and other religious organisations, non-governmental organisations, the business sector, and South African citizens themselves. Active roleplayers include learners, providers, funders, and researchers.

ACTIVITY 3

Make a list of all the roleplayers and stakeholders you can think of who are involved in adult basic education and training.

Factors relating to the international context

As a concept and organised and institutionalised activity, adult education is essentially something that developed only in the 20th century. Before the beginning of the 20th century, there was very little organised adult education and no systematic provision. There was certainly no attempt to coordinate adult education on any international basis. This is not to say that adult education did

not occur – educational activity directed towards adults is evident in some form in most societies. For example, religious education (in all its forms) goes back to the beginning of human history and vocational education (ie learning crafts and trades) also goes back to the beginnings of human civilization. But this sort of education for adults cannot be understood as organised adult education as we know it today.

Contemporary adult education is a response to a number of related historical developments. One of the significant factors here was the rapid growth in scientific knowledge in Great Britain during the 17th and 18th centuries. The process of colonisation of much of the world by the European states is perhaps another. Both these developments had the effect of stimulating interest in, and the desire to gain knowledge about, the world. The Industrial Revolution (in Great Britain) of the 19th century (which followed the developments in science in the 17th and 18th centuries) led to an enormous growth in knowledge and an accompanying need and demand for education and training.

The systematisation of schooling is another factor that encouraged the development of adult education – the development of schooling system made a clear distinction between the education of children and the education of adults. The demands for social justice (which became, in effect, an international movement by the end of the 19th century) have been another social force that has shaped the development of adult education. In recent times, of course, the provision of adult education has been given additional urgency by the arrival of the "information highway" – the internet.

Although modern adult education developed steadily in Britain, Europe and the United States during the first half of the 20th century, the international context only really emerged as a factor after World War II (1939–1945). It was the United Nations that provided the impetus and framework for this international movement through UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Part of the understanding on which the United Nations was founded was that education was one of the keys to social justice and world peace. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, established a universal right to education:

> Article 26
>
> Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible on the basis of merit.
>
> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Although there is no direct reference to adult education in this Article, education is nevertheless understood in very broad terms and the Article provides the basis for the development of adult education. In 1949, UNESCO held its first conference on adult education and there have been another five since then (the most recent in 2009) – all of which have made a significant impact on the growth of adult education. UNESCO's work is not limited to these conferences; the organisation promotes adult education activities in many other ways.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT OF ADULT EDUCATION

A brief history of adult education in South Africa

The beginnings of adult education (1910–1948)

Prior to the beginning of the 20th century, adult education in South Africa was very limited and was mainly confined to the work of missionaries (who taught black adult learners); indeed, missionaries were largely responsible for the general and adult education provided outside the schooling system (which was directed entirely at for white children).

The most obvious signs of adult education in South Africa in the 20th century began with the establishment of night schools. Although this is often referred to as "the night school movement", it was only in the 1940s that the beginnings of a night school system appeared on the Witwatersrand.

Given the economic conditions of South Africa at the time, there was no real demand for educated or highly skilled black workers. Instead, the South African economy required labour for agriculture and mining. In fact, South African politics during this period (1930s and 1940s) was very much influenced by a white working class trying to defend itself from exploitation by management (who were prepared to employ cheaper black labour). The global depression of the 1930s further reduced the economic need for the education and training of black people. It was the Second World War which first created a bigger demand for skilled black labour (and thus adult education) and which took seriously the democratic concerns which led to a war against Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

The apartheid years (1948–1990)

The National Party government, which came to power in 1948 with its policy of apartheid, systematically gained control of black education (by forcing the churches to relinquish their control of education), encouraged the growth of primary education for blacks (the growth of the manufacturing industries now needed semi-skilled workers), and, by the early 1960s, had succeeded in destroying the night schools. During the apartheid era, teaching black people, whether children or adults, in other than a government registered school became a crime.

Educational institutions became a frequent site of political resistance to apartheid and this came to a culmination in the Soweto Revolt of 1976 under the influence of the black consciousness movement. In its aftermath there were limited attempts at reform and state night schools were reopened. The 1980s were years of political struggle in the context of an embattled economy beset by economic sanctions, a different world economic situation and the rise of the South African independent trade union movement. Adult education, and particularly variants of the methods of the Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire, became an important weapon in anti-apartheid mobilisation. A number of academics and then trade unionists advocated for adult basic education for people who had missed out on effective school education.

Post-apartheid South Africa (1990 to date)

The period from 2 February 1990 (when President de Klerk announced the unbanning of political organisations) and the start of a transition to a democratic society has been characterised by great efforts to develop new educational policies, significant failures to really transform the South African education system, and an initially harsh economic situation in which South Africa rejoined

a highly competitive capitalist global economy. Internationally, there has been a strong move towards the standardisation of skills training and qualifications. In this difficult environment, the early promise of great developments in adult education, and particularly in adult basic education and training, have not been fulfilled, although skills training is now receiving substantial funding through the Skills Levy and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Promises of a mass literacy campaign have only now begun to be realised with the Kha ri gude literacy campaign (which started in 2008).

South African adult education today

Providing adult education still faces many structural, logistical and political problems. Although valid policies for adult basic education and training (ABET) (Department of Education, 1997a) were soon developed, since then (the late 1990s), little has been done to develop adult education (in spite of the new government's commitment to "lifelong learning for all"). In 2009, a Ministerial Committee Report (Department of Education 2008) was released on adult education, and this may lead to a renewed adult education system in South Africa. Generally, all sources of funding – the state, business, donor organisations – give to adult education only a very small percentage of what they give to schooling and higher education; however, the start of the mass literacy campaign in 2008 and the revitalisation of the Adult Basic Education system may change all this.

That said, there is, surprisingly, quite a number of adult education courses still being provided in South Africa by a variety of government departments and non-government institutions, organisations and agencies.

At present, the only central authority responsible for organising or coordinating adult education is a Directorate for Adult Education and Training in the national Department of Education. There is still no real adult education "system" in South Africa, although there is a partial one dealing with adult basic education and training (ABET). The National Qualifications Framework administered by the South African Qualifications Authority is also meant to serve adult education and training.

There is still little in the way of accredited professional training for adult educators and few of the sectors involved in non-formal education or training have any criteria for the recruitment of adult educators (nor is there any special system of recruitment for such educators). In fact, given the (potential) number of learners, there are very few educators/trainers in this field. There is some limited training available for adult educators – part-time diplomas and certificate courses run at a number of universities (of which Unisa's work through the ABET Institute is the most prominent). There are also train-the-trainer courses of varying length and quality available through commercial training firms and colleges and in the in-house units of larger companies. Literacy and ABET teacher training courses are run by a few of the non-governmental organisations agencies working in this field. At present, there are no compulsory, or even optional, courses on adult education in the formal school teacher training facilities housed in the universities.

As far as learners themselves are concerned, there are numerous barriers that hamper their participation in adult learner programmes. These include transport problems, poverty, limited free time, lack of information about learning opportunities, crime and violence, the humiliation of adult learners by their peers, and lack of confidence. Many people do not have the basic education or second language proficiency to gain entry into or to benefit from the education and training opportunities that are available.

State provision

Only one state department in South Africa deals explicitly with adult education – the national Department of Education which, as I said earlier on, has a Directorate for Adult Education and Training. Actual provision is through the public adult learning centres (PALCs) in the various provincial education departments; these centres teach formal education to adults from levels 1 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework. Although, since 1994, attention has been given to the adult basic education component, in practice most learners are youths and adults trying to complete their "matric". The budget for this state adult education system remains a small percentage of that spent on school and higher education.

Other state departments make contributions to adult education indirectly through technical training and community extension and information programmes.

The **Department of Labour**, through the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), runs or subsidises training programmes for both employed and unemployed trainees, which is funded by a skills levy imposed on employers. New forms of apprenticeships – learnerships – have been created.

The **Department of Health** spends some of its budget on education and information programmes. Of note here is HIV/AIDS education and family planning.

The **South African National Defence Force** (SANDF) has made increased efforts in adult education and now has a number of adult education centres. It also provides formal education and technical training for army recruits and their families.

The **South African Police Service** is trying to address the educational needs of its employees with less than Grade 12.

The **Department of Correctional Services** has several thousand prisoners studying ABET (including at post-ABET level).

Several million people receive educational programmes on SABC radio and television (these programmes are broadcast in all languages).

Business sector provision

The business sector provides an enormous range of education and training programmes – both to its own employees and to educational bodies (at a fee). Employee training by employers is undoubtedly the largest single delivery system for adult education. A fair estimate is that more than a million employees are involved in in-house training each year. Employee training (formal, non-formal and informal) by employers is, therefore, clearly the largest single delivery system for adult education and training.

Some parts of the business sector have been involved in **adult literacy and basic education activities**, through internal training schemes, course and materials development, and training for profit.

A wide variety of **business education** is available, although the fees often exclude those most needing to benefit from them. Employer sponsorship does not, unfortunately, solve this problem because only the better-off firms (which probably already have a greater internal training capacity) do this regularly. More organisations offer management and professional training than training

for production-line workers. This, in itself, is a reflection of the fact that profit-making educational organisations recognise that professionals are more likely to get training than non-professionals.

Commercial distance (correspondence) education colleges play an extremely important role in adult education in South Africa. Over the years, thousands of South Africans have obtained education and associated qualifications through the 60+ registered colleges. Recent estimates ranging from 300,000 to 600,000 students have been claimed more recently for all of distance education.

There are currently two distance education institutes in South Africa. The **South African Institute for Distance Education** (SAIDE) was formed in 1992 and is particularly interested in distance education based upon open learning principles. In 1996 the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA) was formed; this body has 65 affiliates (including commercial distance education colleges).

In South Africa, there are also a number of **computer software and hardware companies that publish educational material**.

Professional bodies also provide various kinds of professional training and development, often through refresher courses.

Provision by universities and universities of technology

Non-formal adult education used to be provided by the Centres for Adult and Continuing Education at universities and universities of technology, which, not being state subsidised, often functioned more like projects or NGOs than university departments. These Centres have played a vital role, particularly in training (and employing) a core of professionals. However, since the late 1990s, most of these Centres have either had to close or downsize as a result of significantly reduced university state subsidies.

Provision by non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been a vital base for adult and non-formal education. Compared with state structures, they are relatively flexible and responsive to local needs and conditions and often rely on volunteer involvement. NGOs, however, have the following disadvantages: they tend to be localised and isolated, they cannot provide adult education on a large scale, and they are dependent on donor funding. Also, their costs per learner are often very high. Although relatively few NGOs have adult education as a central or even secondary function, many provide some form of adult education service.

An increasing number of NGOs are concerned with development, income-generation and health issues. In most of these areas, adult education has some role to play. Other educational organisations are those which provide organisational development skills to other NGOs.

It is difficult to estimate the number of adult “learners” reached by NGOs, since much of their educational activity is informal and incidental. Perhaps as many as a quarter of a million people gain some kind of education from NGOs each year.

There has been a number of adult education associations which have only lasted a short time, though a relatively small Adult Learning Network remains.

Religious and political

Religious organisations also play an important role in adult education, firstly in educating their own members in their faith and way of life and, secondly, in the more general adult education services some of them offer. Their biggest strengths are that they have an infrastructure that extends into every community, even in the remotest rural areas, and they themselves operate at ground level; they also have direct access, and a commitment to the very poor and marginalised, particularly to women and rural people; they have a long history of using their facilities (buildings, personnel, finances) for educational purposes; and they are still perceived as relatively non-partisan in political conflicts.

Political organisations also have an obvious, if generally propagandist, adult education role (as can be clearly seen at election time!). Apart from internal party political education there were massive voter education campaigns in 1994 and 1995, followed by less intensive campaigns in 1999, 2004 and 2009.

The extent to which the various parties can use adult education as a tool in empowering all adults in the political process has yet to be clearly demonstrated. The potential impact of a well-designed political education campaign could be massive as far as adult education is concerned.

WHAT IS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

Adult basic education and training (ABET) is a form of general education aimed at and designed for adults. ABET provides a conceptual foundation for lifelong learning and development, that consists of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation. This education may be provided in a mother tongue or, more frequently, in the dominant language (English).

In some countries it may have certificate status (as it does in South Africa). The current trend, internationally, is for ABET to become more formal, to have certificate status and to be equivalent to formal schooling. In South Africa, four levels of ABET study are considered to be more or less equivalent to the first nine years of conventional schooling.

In some countries, ABET is called literacy, functional literacy or non-formal education. Literacy and numeracy are, of course, fundamental components of ABET.

Most ABET programmes claim to mix a rights objective (the constitutional right of all citizens to have a basic education) with life skills or specific income generation objectives. Both types of objectives are part of South African education and training policy. The importance of skills was seen in the addition of the “T” for “Training” to ABE (Adult Basic Education).

In some countries there is, however, a renewed national stress – in all basic education – on the need to teach the fundamental skills of reading, writing and numeracy rather than just “skills” training – the argument being that, in the modern world, the “skills” of reading, writing and numeracy are central. Given the rapid growth in modern technology, all skills tend to become outdated and in need of upgrading. For this upgrading and training to occur, it is the fundamental skills of reading, writing and numeracy that are required, and that make lifelong learning possible.

In South Africa, the number of learners in the public ABET system is about 250,000, most learners being enrolled at the lower level courses. The number of public centres may be in decline and this sector has not grown. The Department of Labour trains about 145,000, mainly unemployed, learners every year in various skills, but it is difficult to estimate what percentage of this provision is genuine adult basic education. Correctional Services run classes for about 10,000 prisoners. Other departments tend to have smaller numbers of learners. Local government reaches as many as 25,000 learners. The business sector is still the major provider, with as many as 125,000 learners (this sector includes utility parastatals such as Eskom and Transnet). However, even business support has become significantly reduced over the last ten years; training is now more directly related to production and staff advancement (which is regarded as more useful). In the business world, the provision of adult education tends to be focused on English literacy. Learners served by NGOs went into an enormous decline from the 60,000 or so learners of the early 1990s. A few NGOs (eg Prolit and Operation Upgrade) that survived the harsher economic environment now serve about 20,000 learners.

Adult basic education policies

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that has official adult basic education and training policies.

The forerunners of these policies included two reports prepared by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), which was set up by the anti-apartheid National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) in 1992, one on **Adult Education** (1993) and another on **Adult Basic Education** (1992). The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), in its Participatory Research Project (PRP) (1993), also submitted a report that argued for a close integration of Adult Basic Education and skills training in a modularised system backed by new certification authorities.

The African National Congress's *Implementation plan for education and training* (IPET) of April 1994 (1994b), as well as its more general policy statements in *The Reconstruction and development programme* (1994a) and *A policy framework for education and training* (1995) influenced the initial policy ABET development after 1994.

In September 1995 the national Department of Education issued *A national adult basic education and training framework: interim guidelines* and, in October 1997, issued the major policy document that is still national policy: *the Policy document on adult basic education and training*. A major implementation plan document, the *A national multi-year implementation plan for adult education and training: provision and accreditation*, was issued in 1997. However, this plan was never really implemented because of a lack of funding and implementation capacity. Both these documents assumed the existence of a formal ABET system.

In 1999, a new Minister of Education recognised that there was a need to confront the issue of illiteracy and that formal ABET programmes could not do this. Eventually, the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) was set up; however, this too failed (except for a late partnership with Unisa's ABET Institute before funding ceased).

In 2006, a Ministerial Committee on Literacy report led to the setting up of the *Kha ri gude* literacy campaign and, in 2009, a Ministerial Committee on Adult Education report was released that may encourage the development of a new set of adult education policies.

THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND STANDARDS

One very important contextual influence on ABET was the setting up of a National Qualifications Framework.

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) can be seen as an organising principle for both formal and non-formal education in the scheme of lifelong learning. An NQF provides a public and national system of qualification validation.

Adult education needs to have systems for learning validation that are equivalent to the systems of formal education, regardless of where and when the learning occurred. That is why adult basic education and training was included within the NQFs – so that adult learners could gain access to different levels and kinds of learning.

The National Qualifications Framework categorises all education and training qualifications into ten levels of difficulty (originally there were eight levels). The highest level is level 10 (for qualifications such as a doctorate). The lowest level, NQF level 1, is for qualifications at primary school or ABET level.

The ten levels are, for convenience, divided into three bands, equivalent to primary school, secondary school and post-secondary school qualifications.

All national recognised qualifications will be at a specific NQF level. This tells the provider and the learner what level of learning is involved (whatever the name of the actual qualification). This module, for example, is at NQF level 5. The Unisa Certificate in ABET is at NQF 5 and the Diploma in ABET is at NQF 6.

The NQF is also seen as a way of integrating education and training, recognising prior learning, and making it easier for people to plan their careers and gain access to formal systems of education (from which they were previously excluded).

The NQF is administered and kept up to date by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). You can look at all the qualifications registered by SAQA on the NQF on the SAQA website at http://www.saqa.org.za/

After ten years of operation the NQF system was reviewed and a number of general and technical changes were made.

South Africa's revised National Qualifications Framework

School grades and Adult Basic Education and Training levels		NQF levels	Bands	Qualifications	Providers
		10	Higher education and training	Doctorates	Universities Universities of Technology (polytechnics) Training colleges FET Colleges Professional and occupational academies
		9		Masters	
		8		Honours degrees and postgraduate diplomas	
		7		Bachelor degrees and advanced diplomas	
		6		Diplomas and advanced certificates	
		5		Higher certificates	
12		4	Further education and training	School/college/trade certificates	FET Colleges (technical colleges) Secondary schools Business colleges Commercial Training organisations
11		3			
10		2			
9	ABET 4	1	General education and training	School/ABET/trade certificates	Schools Public adult learning centres NGOs Commercial training organisations
8					
7	ABET 3				
6					
5	ABET 2				
4					
3	ABET 1				
2					
1					
0					Early childhood development centres

Standards

An educational standard is a criterion for measuring a specific learning achievement.

In the South African outcomes-based system, educational outcomes are described in terms of standards. The standard describes what outcome or outcomes have to be achieved. It also tells you how you would assess whether that the outcome has been achieved (by listing a set of assessment criteria together with administrative and regulatory information).

Officially recognised education and training standards are registered on the NQF at a particular level.

Standards that will earn the learner some kind of credit towards a qualification are called "unit standards". A unit standard is, therefore, simply a standard or set of standards which is registered by the South African Qualifications Authority and for which you can get a credit (either on its own or as a credit towards another qualification).

The purpose of a unit standard is to provide guidance to the learner (about what outcomes are to be assessed), to the assessor (about assessment criteria) and to the educator (who has to prepare the learning material to help the learner reach the outcome).

For each of the learner areas, and at various ABET certification levels, unit standards have been developed using the SAQA unit standards format.

The use of standards has heavily influenced formal ABET qualifications, curriculum and materials in South Africa.

TRENDS IN LITERACY AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As we said at the beginning, the context of education and training is never fixed, but always changing. As an ABET practitioner, you have to keep up to date with these changes.

It is probable that South Africa will, after some years of experimentation with standards, slowly move towards a more flexible approach. There have been many criticisms that the ABET system was and is too formal and inflexible. This trend has also been seen in the start of the *Kha ri gude* literacy campaign, which is designed to reach those who were not been educated through the state ABET system. In fact, it is probable that a new adult education system will be developed in future years.

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STUDY UNIT 2

What types of communities exist in South Africa?

INTRODUCTION

Human beings live in communities, which means that communities are a major contextual influence on all of us. The nature of the community moulds how each of us lives, thinks and learns. It is therefore important that the ABET practitioner understands how various kinds of communities influence learners.

AIMS OF THE UNIT

- To present a basic understanding of the community and its influence on all learners.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Describe the various types of communities that exist in South Africa today.

You will demonstrate that you can do this by

- explaining the difference between close-knit communities and associations
- describing the common characteristics of urban and rural communities and those in transition
- describing some of the characteristics of youth
- describing how the characteristics of various communities influence educational interventions

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

In South Africa, there are a wide range of communities – from the very traditional communities of the rural areas to the communities of a large modern city such as Johannesburg.

What do the differences between such communities mean for educators and learning interventions?

The four key questions here are:

- How do communities differ from each other?
- How do these communities influence learning?
- What is the role of ABET in helping to develop South African communities?
- How can an ABET practitioner work successfully in the various kinds of community found in South Africa today?

What are the different kinds of communities?

I would list the following:

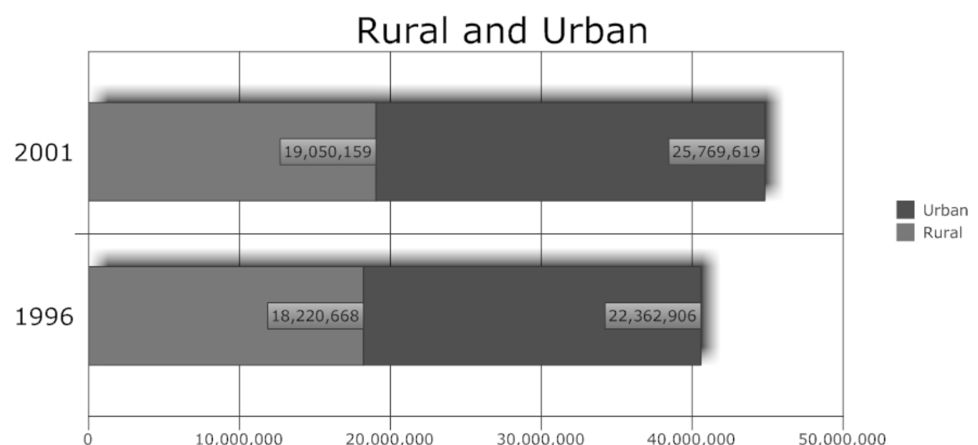
- Rural and urban
- Traditional and modern
- Communal and communities composed of individuals
- Religious and secular
- Middle class and working class
- Township
- Suburban
- Inner-city
- Informal settlement

As you can see, some of these differences are geographical (rural/urban), some are related to work and class, and other differences are about culture, beliefs and values (traditional/modern; religious/secular). Of course, some communities may be a mixture of geography, class, and culture (urban areas are an example of this type of community).

We also need to remember that these communities are not static. They are changing all the time. For example, people move from rural to urban areas and even in rural areas the way of life of traditional people is very different today from what it was like a hundred years ago.

The characteristics of urban and rural communities

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, more and more people are moving to urban areas. This trend is depicted in the graph below (note the increase in the number of urban people between 1996 and 2001) although, in South Africa, there are still large numbers of people living in rural communities.



In this unit we shall explore the difference between urban and rural communities in more detail. For example, we all know that there are communities of people living in rural areas and in urban areas. We also know about squatter settlements, informal settlements and so on. But what do these words actually mean?

All of us know that a cattle farm in the Limpopo is in a rural area, and that the high-rise flats of Hillbrow in Johannesburg are in an urban area. But what are the actual differences as far as the communities themselves are concerned?

Rural communities

In looking at rural communities as ABET practitioners we need to understand both the meaning of the word "community" and have some idea of what an ABET programme can achieve in a poor rural area.

Case study 1:

Mrs Radebe's class in the rural village of Xhugxwala

We are in the Transkei travelling to the Visusizwe Public Adult Learning Centre in the rural village of Xhugxwala. Mr Mtetwa, our driver, tells us that he has lived in the Transkei (in the Eastern Cape province) all his life. He says: "A large part of the Transkeian population lives in the rural areas, and the village of Xhugxwala is one of the poorest villages in the Eastern Cape."

He says that the people of the village do not have either electricity or flushing toilets. The poor sanitation is one of the main causes of gastroenteritis, a common killer of children, especially children under five years of age.

Mr Mtetwa also tells us that many of the villagers cannot read and write. The literacy rate is approximately 50%. (That means that only five out of every ten people can read.)

He also tells us: "Because of the shortage of jobs, many of the healthy and educated men have left Xhugxwala to look for work in the towns and cities. So there are far more women and children than men in the village. Most of the people are very, very poor. I think that about a third of the families are too poor to feed their children properly."

As we drive along, we see groups of women carrying containers of water. Mr Mtetwa tells us that the women in the village spend many hours each day walking to fetch water. They also spend a lot of time looking for wood to make fires for heating their homes and cooking their food. We see many children running about and Mr Mtetwa tells us that 60% of African children live in rural areas.

Eventually we arrive at the Visusizwe Public Adult Learning Centre at the local school and we meet Mrs Radebe and her class.

We see that Mrs Radebe has seventeen women in the class. Sometimes, she says, one or two men join the class. "I think that it is a good thing to have men in the class. If we only allow women to join our classes, it would disadvantage the men who have stayed behind in the village."

The women in her class are talking in groups about the work they do to try to earn some money. One of them is talking about how she farms chickens, and another is telling a group how she sells her beadwork when she visits her sister in Durban.

Then Mrs Ntsiki, one of the learners, tells the others about how she made a salt-sugar mixture to be dissolved in water for her baby who had gastro-enteritis. They had learned how to make

the mixture in the previous lesson. Her baby is now sleeping quietly in a blanket on the floor beside her. She says: “Luckily I knew about dehydration and how to measure the water, salt and sugar to make the correct solution.”

The learners begin to write down new words and to read the words and sentences to each other. Mrs Radebe tells us that the class meets for two hours each week. They bring their books and pens to write down new words or important ideas which come from the discussion.

Mrs Radebe tells us: “After the first class, my learners did not come back again. I was very worried and thought that I had done something wrong. I did not know what to do. Then I thought of a way to find out what the problem was”. This was what she told us:

“I sat at the place where the women came to fetch water. I spoke to them and asked them why they had stopped coming to the class. They told me that there were no jobs in the village, so they could not see how learning to read and write could help them. They said that they had plenty of other things to worry about; they had to get food for their children, and they spent most of their time fetching wood and water. They told me that they could not waste time coming to class to learn things they could not use to improve their lives.”

“They also told me that they were afraid that when their husbands came home from work in the towns, they would be angry to hear that the women were attending classes. One of the women told me that she had joined an adult education class once before. She told me that, when her husband heard that she was going to school, he told her not to think that she was ‘a clever somebody’ and threw her books into the fire!”

“I also discovered that our local chief was not very happy about the women going to classes. I went and spoke to the chief and convinced him that the classes would be a good thing for his people and the village.”

“After speaking to the women and the chief, I thought about all the problems the women had. I began to think of ways to help them cope with life in the village. Then I persuaded the learners to come back to the class. We talked about some of their problems, and some of the things they could do together to solve problems. Soon they started realising that, by discussing their problems in a group, they might be able to solve their problems. Some of the women became quite enthusiastic about attending our classes when they realised that we were going to talk about real problems and think about ways of dealing with them. They even managed to persuade some of their friends who had stayed away to come to the next class.”

“Now,” Mrs Radebe says, “I try to get the women to speak about and to understand the problems of rural life. Most of my learners are very poor; many are so poor that they cannot feed their children properly. They have needs which require urgent attention; so we read and write about the kinds of problems they are having. This approach to learning is best for my class at this stage, because it means that we are learning about things that are important to them.”

“But we don’t only talk about problems. I was very happy last year when the mothers in the class said that they wanted to start a school-feeding scheme. They started a vegetable garden. While they were doing this, I taught them how to measure the distances between plants and how to grow the vegetables. I showed them how to plant the vegetables in such a way that they don’t waste water, because water is very scarce in the village. At the same time, they learned about the nutritional value of the vegetables and how to care for children. It was not long before they realised that they could sell the extra vegetables.”

"They asked me to teach them how to read and write words that would help them when they are selling their vegetables, and how to calculate costs, so that they can fix a reasonable price for their vegetables. Last month I bought a calculator so that they could check their calculations

They are doing so well now, especially the women who had been to school for a few years before they came to our classes. In fact, I wish that I could get come extra training for myself, I sometimes struggle to keep up with some of the women in the class!"

"Most of the women are keen to carry on with their learning now. I hear that educated people are talking about 'lifelong learning'. Maybe this is where lifelong learning starts," she says with a smile.

"So you see," says Mrs Radebe, "I have been teaching at the Visusizwe Public Adult Learning Centre for two years, and I am very happy that it has now become necessary to employ another three teachers."

ACTIVITY 1

Make a list of all the different things that the women in Mrs Radebe's class learnt.

- In what way do you think that classes like this could help them?
- If they moved to the city, do you think the lessons that they have had would still be useful to them? Give reasons for your answer.

Compare your answers with ours (given below), but remember that there are no right or wrong answers to this question.

Our response

The case study tells us that the women in Mrs Radebe's class learnt many different things:

- How to read and write
- What to do if a child gets gastroenteritis
- How to grow and sell vegetables
- How to work out whether they are making a profit or a loss from selling vegetables
- How to set up a school-feeding scheme

If you look at the above list, you will see that the women need to know a lot to be able to do these tasks. We will explain what we mean by this remark after you have completed the next activity.

Many of these skills would also be useful in an urban area. You might not grow vegetables in an urban area, but you could sell other things and you would still need to work out if you were making a profit. Knowing how to set up a school feeding scheme would also be useful for poor people in an urban area.

So ABET can play an important role in solving community problems. ABET can empower people and help to improve their quality of life.

ACTIVITY 2

Think about what you need to do (and to know) if you want to bake a cake.

- You will need to be able to read the recipe (reading).
- You will need to weigh some of the ingredients (measuring weight in grams).
- You will need to measure the milk (measuring liquid in millilitres).
- You will need to be able to count the eggs and spoons of salt (counting).
- You will need to know when the oven is at the right temperature (know about measuring heat in degrees).
- You will need to know how many minutes the cake has to bake for (calculate the cooking time).

Can you see that we need certain knowledge and skills (like measuring) to do certain tasks? What do you think the women in Mrs Radebe's class needed to know in order to do the things that we referred to in the case study? Let's look more closely at what her learners do.

The women in Mrs Radebe's class learnt a number of different skills:

- planting and selling
- how to *communicate* with each other about prices
- how to *read* and *write*
- how to do basic *arithmetic* and do profit and loss calculations
- how to work in groups in order to organise their projects (this taught them how to solve community problems by working together)
- the importance of good nutrition
- how to care for children
- what to do if their children fall ill

These are just some of the skills and knowledge that ABET practitioners need to be able to teach.

How do Mrs Radebe's classes help these women?

Mrs Radebe's learners seemed to benefit from what they learned in the classes. Classes like these are obviously important, since they teach adults to read and write and do basic arithmetic. But they do *more* for people than this. They also help people to *think about their problems as a group*, and to *think about solutions* so that they can cope better with their lives.

If we look back at the case study we can see how the classes helped the women to cope with the problems of living in a poor rural area.

The case study tells us that the women have decided to start a feeding scheme at the local school. This is an example of how they, as a group, were able to *think* about what they had learnt and then how they used this knowledge to *solve* some of the problems in the community.

It also tells us that they were able to work *together in a team* to organise the feeding scheme. Team and group work are important for community building.

They learned basic **numeracy** (arithmetic) or how to work with numbers, and this enabled them to calculate the price they need to charge to make a profit. They learnt that if they sold their extra vegetables at the right price, they could start to earn some money.

To start a vegetable selling project, or a school-feeding scheme, the women had to speak to the school principal. They had to convince the principal that the project was a good one. They also had to talk to the other parents to get them involved. The women needed very good **communication** skills, and also a great deal of self-confidence, to be able to persuade the school principal and the other parents to help them.

We think that the classes helped the learners to improve their communication skills, and their confidence in themselves. Some people call this **empowerment**. Empowering people to help themselves is one of the important functions of ABET.

Also, through their new understanding of the **environment** and of health issues, the learners were able to improve the quality of their own lives and the lives of the school children. The case study tells us that Mrs Ntsiki was able to help her child when she was ill. Parents with a basic education are more likely to know about improved health, **hygiene** and **nutrition** practices, and this reduced the chances of their children becoming ill and dying.

So we can see that, besides the important skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, the adult learners in Mrs Radebe's class learnt many other things that helped them improve the quality of their everyday lives.

ABET classes in rural areas are particularly important in developing literate people because, in these areas, illiteracy rates are considerably higher than they are in urban areas. One reason for this is that the children of farm workers have great difficulty in gaining access to formal school education. In those places where literacy classes are offered to farm workers, they are generally offered after working hours, usually at a centre or farm school some distance from the learners' workplaces and/or homes. The fact that learners have to travel to classes after hours, and have to pay for the classes, means that most farm workers do not, in effect, have access to ABET. When classes are held at local farm schools, there is the additional problem that most of these schools have no electricity.

But before we look into other aspects of rural communities and the importance of literacy and ABET to rural communities, we need to examine the term "community".

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

We have been discussing the role ABET can play in the Xhugxwala community. We spoke about how education had made a difference to the people in this community. We know that there are different kinds of communities in South Africa. Perhaps now is a good time to think about what we mean when we speak of "a community".

Usually, when we use the term *community*, we are referring to a group of people who have certain things in common. Do you live in a community? Before answering this question, do the Activity below.

ACTIVITY 3

Read through the following list. Put a tick (✔) in the box if the answer is "Yes", and a cross (x) if your answer is "No".

	Yes	No
Do you live close to other people in quite a small area?		
Do you feel that you belong to a group?		
Do the other people in your area have similar traditions and customs?		
Do they have a similar history?		
Do they speak the same language?		
Do you know other people and their families fairly well?		
Do you know your neighbours?		
Do you feel linked to others in the community?		
Do you feel that you can depend on other people for help in times of trouble?		
Do you know any people you can ask to look after your child when he or she is sick?		
Do you know any people you could ask to lend you money?		
Do people feel that there is a correct way of behaving in order to fit in with other people living in the area?		
Would most of the people in your area think badly of you if you left your wife (or husband) for another woman (or man)?		

The more ticks you have given, the closer-knit your community is, and the more of a "community" it is. We are certain that the people in the village of Xhugxwala would have answered "yes" to almost all these questions.

In rural communities people know a great deal about each other. Most rural communities are close-knit because there are strong bonds between the members of the community. We call them "close-knit" because many of the features of a community that we listed in Activity 3 exist and are very much part of people's experience.

Sometimes people who do not live close together may also feel that they are a community, because they have a sense of belonging to a group which shares a culture, history, language or customs. An example might be an ethnic group, such as Zulus or Jews, or a religious denomination or group such as Catholics or the Zion Christian Church. In South Africa we often hear people speaking about the Greek community or the Jewish community. Although people belonging to these groups might live far apart, all over the country or even in different countries, and they might not know everyone who belongs to the group, their sense of belonging is strong enough for them to feel linked to others in the group, and to help each other in times of trouble.

In some communities (eg in a Johannesburg suburb or in a block of flats in Pretoria), people might not even know who lives next door. Would we call these people a community? Maybe,

but they would not be seen as a close-knit community, because they would not answer "yes" to many of the questions we asked in Activity 3.

What we have learnt so far is that communities are not the same. This means we need to understand how they differ if we want to be able to establish appropriate ABET programmes in different kinds of communities.

WHAT IS A RURAL COMMUNITY?

Let us now look a little more closely at what we mean when we speak of a "rural community". About 42% of South Africans live in rural areas, most of them in traditional (tribal areas).

When we think of a rural community, the following comes to mind:

- It is a community of people who do not live in an urban area (ie near a big town or a city), but in the countryside.
- Most people living in a rural community work in the fields growing crops or looking after cattle, chickens or other animals – in other words, most rural communities are agricultural communities.
- A rural community is usually quite small and does not consist of more than one or two hundred people.
- There are not many paying jobs in rural areas. Because of this, most of the men go to the cities to find work in the factories and mines.
- This means that there are usually more women than men in the rural areas.
- Rural communities are usually poorer than urban communities, because many rural people are either employed in low-paying jobs on farms, unemployed, or are old-age pensioners who have to live off small government pensions.
- Most households in rural areas do not have electricity and many do not have toilets. A very small number have a water tap in their home. (In other words, many of the things urban people take for granted are missing in rural communities.)

Problems facing rural communities

There are many problems facing rural communities. In the next activity we will look at some of these problems:

ACTIVITY 4

What do you know about rural areas?

Make a list of all the problems experienced in rural areas.

We are sure that you could list many of these problems. We listed the following:

General poverty

Most rural people are poor. This poverty is the result of a number of things, but the most obvious are lack of well paying jobs (or, indeed, any paying jobs), lack of good agricultural land, and lack or resources and education to fully make use of what land is available.

Unemployment and low wages

There are very few jobs in rural areas. This means that there is a great deal of poverty. The majority of rural households are living on less than the minimum.

Lack of facilities

Water supplies, sanitation, toilets, electricity, reliable transport, telephones, etc are often not available in rural areas.

Inadequate health care

Because health-care facilities are lacking, people suffer from poor health that is made worse by poverty, inadequate food, and ignorance.

Poor school facilities

The facilities in rural schools are usually inferior to those in urban schools; also, children may have to walk long distances to get to school. The facilities in farm schools are particularly inadequate.

A history of disruption

During the apartheid era, many communities were forced from their land. Because there is a limited amount of land available, many communities are landless, or have too little land on which to grow crops and keep animals. This, of course, contributes to the overall poverty experienced in rural areas.

Lack of access to land

The land that is available is often controlled by corrupt and undemocratic traditional leaders who allocate land to their families and friends. This means that ordinary people often have little land of their own.

Natural disasters

Long periods without rain, or too much rain, makes it even more difficult for communities who depend on farming to survive.

Female-headed households

Many households are headed by women, and families are dependent on the women's work to survive. However, according to tradition, women are not allowed to own land, and are not often included in decision-making processes (which are controlled by older men).

Low levels of education

Levels of education in rural areas are also very low. Surveys have shown that the people in rural households responsible for health care (usually one of the adults in the household) often have very low levels of school education or none at all. Provinces that have large numbers of people living in rural areas – Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape – all have high levels of illiteracy.

The role of ABET in solving rural problems

We saw in the case study that ABET can help to solve some of the problems experienced by people living in a rural area. By helping people to acquire basic skills, ABET can improve people's lives and, in fact, help them to build stronger communities.

Skills such as brick-making, building, welding or carpentry can help people to sell the products they make and thus earn an income. This is known as being "self-employed". People with skills are also in a better position to find a job working for someone else. They can also use their skills to improve the situation in their own communities by, for example, making bricks and building houses as their contribution to a community project.

ABET can also help people produce more, and better, food on limited land. People with basic education will know how to rotate crops, how to use appropriate fertilisers to improve the quality of the soil, and so on. And, as we saw in the case study, people who have learnt numeracy and basic business skills understand how they can sell their products at a profit.

We also saw in the case study how ABET can help to improve the health situation in rural areas by teaching people primary health care. Through ABET, people learn more about nutrition, hygiene, and health and safety in the home (many illnesses can be prevented if correct steps are taken in the home).

Many of the problems experienced by people living in rural areas can be solved if people have a basic understanding of the law and their rights, and know how to contact the right people in government to deal with their problems (whether these problems are about land rights, getting a pension, problems with employers and so on).

COMMUNITIES AND CITY LIFE

We shall now focus on a way of life that is the opposite of rural life – city life.

ACTIVITY 5

Imagine you live in a Johannesburg suburb or township. You have come to the city centre to do some shopping.

- There are crowds of people around you. How many of these people do you expect to know personally?
- You want to buy your mother a present, because she is coming out of hospital today. You are wondering what to buy. Would you ask some people in the street for advice?
- You find that you have forgotten to bring your money with you. Do you ask someone in the crowd to lend you some?
- If one of the people in the crowd had a sick child at home, would you feel that you should offer support?
- You think you might like a complete change of image – a new haircut and a different style of clothes. Before you go ahead, would you ask some of the people in the street whether they think it is a good idea?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging among the crowd of people that surrounds you?
- Do you share a common culture with them?

Write down your answers to these questions before reading our answers below.

Our response

Here are our answers:

- In a city shopping mall you might occasionally meet someone you know. But generally you would not expect to know any of the people around you. In a city centre you are one person in a crowd of strangers.
- Nobody in the crowd knows anything about you and your mother. So they would have no idea of what might be the "right" present for the kind of family you come from. If you did ask someone, they might make a quick suggestion. But they would avoid getting into a discussion about details of your family life. In the city, your family is your own private affair.
- People in a city crowd owe each other nothing. Nobody will feel any obligation to help you out of your difficulty. Forgetting your money is your own problem. No stranger is likely to lend you money. In fact, anyone you ask will simply assume that you are trying to trick them.
- Since the people in the crowd are strangers to you, you would not know if one of them had a sick child at home. But even if you found out somehow that one of them did, you would feel little obligation to offer support. With a busy life to get on with, and with worries of your own to sort out, you cannot normally afford to get involved in someone else's troubles.
- On a city street your appearance is your own business. Other people in the street have no power over you. You are free to present yourself to the world just about any way you like (as long as you look more or less "normal"). The people around have no interest in what you look like, so long as you do not look as though you might harm them. If you asked for their approval, people would be surprised, and would probably say "I don't know", or "suit yourself".
- If you have been in this street many times, you might have a general sense of "feeling at home", and of belonging among the general crowd of people who pass through there. However, this is a much less clear sense of belonging than the deep sense of binding attachment felt by people in close-knit communities. For a start, looking at all the people around you, it would be very difficult to define who "belonged" and who did not.
- People in cities share a common culture – at least to some extent. For example, there are city clothes, city life styles and city ways of talking. However, it is a very varied culture. It has different styles for business people, manual workers, and streetwise youth and so on, as well as a mixture of ethnic and cultural influences. It is also a culture that continually changes, along with changing fashions (unlike rural culture, which is much more rooted in tradition). Also, people do not just pick up city culture directly through contact with each other (as they do in rural communities). Instead, they get it from magazines, television, films and advertising. In other words, the culture shared by city people tends to be spread through the mass media.

Is the crowd in the city centre a community?

ACTIVITY 6

Look back now at the questions in Activity 3. For a close-knit community you would answer "yes" to all of these questions. Now check through the list and see whether you would answer "yes" if you applied them to the crowd of people shopping in the city.

Checking down the list, we can see that, although people are crowded next to each other:

- Their *lives* are not closely bound together.

- They do not even know each other, so they certainly do not know a lot about each other's lives.
- What *culture* they share is mainly a mass media culture, rather than one which arises out of the daily life of a community.
- If people have a *sense of belonging*, it is a weak one.
- People feel very little *obligation* to *support* each other.
- People are not bound by traditional *power* structures.
- Anyone can join the crowd on the street. There are no *boundaries* and no outsiders.

Obviously, the crowded city shopping street has none of the features of a strong, close-knit community. In fact, we cannot really call it any kind of community. It is basically just a mass of individual people, each going about their own business, and paying very little attention to each other. They do not feel involved in each other's lives.

And yet the street is not completely chaotic. People act in an orderly way. What we see going on is quite regular and predictable. If these people are not bound together within a community, what does bind them into the ways of city life? They may not be a community, but they are, in effect, an association.

What binds city people's lives together?

ACTIVITY 7

- From what you know of city life, why do you think people tend to behave in a predictable way on the street?
- What do you think binds them into a fairly orderly gathering of people?

There are many ways you could have answered these questions.

We are going to suggest two answers which you might find a bit surprising. Think about them carefully and see whether you agree.

In the city, people's lives are bound together through market forces and the laws of the state.

Earning and spending money

Nearly all the people on the street are there either to *earn* money (by selling things or by selling their labour as workers in jobs) or to spend money, buying things they need or want. The sellers have to dress respectably and behave in an orderly way in order to attract customers. The buyers have to behave well if they want to be served. (The enormous new shopping malls that are being built across South Africa are some of the most controlled and orderly places in our society.) The same is true in many other business places, such as offices and factories. Because people depend on them, either for an income as workers, or for buying what they need as customers, they generally conform to standards of dress and behave politely. To put this another way, we can say that, for much of their daily lives, people are bound together within "market activities" which, in a modern city, tend to be controlled and orderly. Or more briefly – *city people's lives are bound together by market forces.*

The state governs people's lives

Another reason why people behave in an orderly way is that the South African state (like any other state) has laws. Through its police force and law courts it punishes people who break these laws. When you see cars stop at the robots, the drivers are obeying the state. When you put money in a parking metre, or when you pay for something in a shop instead of just taking it, you are obeying the laws of the state.

As a *citizen* of South Africa, you pay taxes and you are thereby entitled to services from the state (such as roads, electricity and education). In addition, you are entitled to participate democratically in the state by voting, and perhaps also by being active in local politics. In return you are expected to accept the laws of the state and to abide by them. So our second answer is that *city people are bound together as citizens of the state of South Africa*.

(You may ask, but do not people in rural areas also buy and sell and obey the laws? Yes indeed they do, but the importance of the local strong community is a far more important force on people's lives than it is in a city.)

In other words, in the city centre, so long as you earn money and fit in with the buying and selling which goes on the urban area, and obey the laws of state, you are free to do what you like. You can live in a room filled with old newspapers and empty milk bottles if you want to! You can worship aliens from outer space. You can dress as a man during the day and as a woman at night. You are not bound by what your neighbours think of you. You do not have to follow tradition (except for the traditions of your own family). You are, in fact, an independent citizen.

In cities, people live their own lives without worrying very much about tradition or the rulings of "elders". People in cities who do pay attention to traditions or the opinions of the elders tend to be part of smaller, real communities that exist as special groups within cities, sometimes in special areas or "ghettos".

Special communities in the city

Although from what we have said above you may think that there is not much community in a city, in fact, there are few people who live without *any* kind of community in their lives.

ACTIVITY 8

Do you live in a city or a large town? If not, perhaps you have read newspaper reports, stories in magazines and books, or seen films, about life in cities.

- Where do people make friends?
- Where can they find sympathy and support?

Write down a few ideas.

Community in the workplace

Work can provide regular contact with a group of people, who will share experiences with you and perhaps offer some support in times of need. However, workplaces vary a lot. Domestic cleaners

and night watchmen, for example, are often quite isolated in their work, whereas working in a hospital or school places you in a large, busy community. Large factories may also form a kind of community.

Neighbourhoods

In most cities, particularly in the poorer parts, there are areas such as townships where people have grown up together, gone to the same schools and played in the same streets. As adults they still meet in the streets and shops and discuss life, and they may also support each other through difficult times. So there is a kind of community, but not as close-knit as in a rural village, because people travel out of the community for many reasons (eg to work). Also, this kind of city community is not based on tradition and does not have sharp boundaries. Its members may have originally come from different areas. And yet the members of this community may have quite a strong sense of belonging.

By contrast, in the wealthier suburbs, where people drive rather than walk, and where children play at home instead of in the streets, neighbours are less likely to know each other well. They seldom need to call on each other for support, and contact between neighbours tends to be polite, rather than close. In these suburbs, people live mainly private lives with their families and their chosen friends. If there is any sense of community, it tends to be weak, and it has little depth. Residents do not usually feel upset about moving to a different suburb, because they feel little sense of belonging.

Then there are many other areas which fall between these two extremes. Cities, in fact, have a wide range of neighbourhoods – some with closer and more supportive communities and others where community life is weak and superficial. But whatever kind of neighbourhood it is, no city neighbourhood can offer the closeness and warmth of a village community. The fact is that city life does not put you in touch with the whole spectrum of society, and nor does it provide a complete way of life. When things go wrong, it is easy to feel lonely and uncared for in the city.

Community through organisations

Even if you are lonely in your neighbourhood, cities offer another option. You can join an association or organisation and meet people that way. You might start to attend a church group, or get involved with a local political group, join a sports club, a stokvel or even a burial society. Because organisations like these bring people together regularly, they too create a kind of community. However, this is not usually a broad community of the type found in a village, where people of *all* kinds belong. It is an association of people who share a particular interest and who meet for just part of their lives. Different social needs may be met by joining different associations. So a middle class person living in a suburb might, for very different reasons and needs, belong to a church, a sports club, a book club, and a charity organisation such as Rotary.

Members of such associations or organisations form only a casual community. People come and go. They know only a limited amount about each other and they feel only limited obligations towards each other. Unlike a close-knit community, which provides the context within which the whole of a person's life is lived, these are shallow, "part-time" communities and people spend their lives leaving and joining new associations. For example, you may join your church community on Sundays, your sports community on a Wednesday evening, and a recreational community on a Saturday afternoon.

By joining several organisations you can be linked to a range of these low-key, "part-time" communities or associations. (And you may have a workplace community too.) City life can thus offer you quite a lot of freedom in constructing a "social" side to your life, according to your personal interests. You can be casually connected to various groups of people.

In urban areas communities overlap; the boundaries between these various communities tend to be "fuzzy". There are many overlapping communities and any one person may be linked to several. For example, a shopkeeper might be on friendly terms with a community of fellow shopkeepers, while at the same time he or she might be linked to an ethnic community, and might also be an active member of a church choir. Each of these communities might play an important part in this person's life. The shopkeeper cannot, however, experience the deep, life-long ties and the mutual support of a close-knit community.

In short: in "developed", highly urbanised countries, most people live private lives, and link up casually with a range of low-key communities/associations. This way of life is a feature of modern industrialised societies. It is, for example, the way the majority of people now live in the United States of America and in western Europe. It has the attraction of offering people independence and freedom of choice. But it can also give rise to feelings of insecurity, loneliness and helplessness.

ARE CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES THE IDEAL WAY OF LIFE?

ACTIVITY 9

- Would you rather live a life of independence in the city, or do you prefer the idea of living in a close-knit community?
- What do you see as the main advantages and disadvantages of living outside a close-knit community?

Loneliness and vulnerability

The disadvantages of life outside a close-knit community include feeling lonely and vulnerable. Without people around who know you well, you can wonder at times exactly who you are and what your life is about – whether anyone would notice if you died. Without a strong shared culture with rules telling you how to dress, how to behave and how to spend your time, life can be directionless. Without others to support you, a stroke of bad luck can ruin your life. And without a sense of belonging to a collective body of people, you are powerless to try to change things.

Wider opportunities and more freedom

City life, as we have said, offers wider opportunities and more freedom to build your own life. A close-knit community can be very strict and rigid. Indeed, community members can act very harshly towards those who do not conform to traditional customs or rules. Many rural women have to spend their lives doing hard domestic and agricultural labour, under the stern rule of the men, both within the family and in the community at large. For them an urban community can

be liberating – it can offer a much wider range of work roles and education, and less subservient relationships within families. And for both men and women the economic opportunities tend to be greater in cities. The traditional community, with its set ways, is geared to simple forms of production, such as subsistence farming. Successful participation in a modern economy requires more flexible ways of living and working. So, for many people, the privacy and independence of urban life, the flexibility it offers, and the greater economic opportunities available are worth more than the loss of community support.

Other kinds of urban settlement communities

Townships

Like a city, a township is densely populated, but it usually lacks many of the services and facilities needed to support the independent, private life style of the modern city. Unemployment excludes many of the residents from participating in the mainstream economy, so they tend to have weaker links with the "market" side of society. Meanwhile, because the state has not yet effectively intervened in the townships, residents do not have the same facilities as city or suburban dwellers. Without a proper income or adequate protection and support from the state, the individual has to rely on finding a place within a supportive community. The township community is not, therefore, a casual, part-time involvement, as it is in a city, but an essential framework for daily life.

Since the township community still has to rely on its own resources for some things, it tends to have some of the mutual dependence of the close-knit community. However, its size means that a township is usually too large to function as a really close-knit community, and it lacks the unity resulting from long-established way of life and a traditional culture. The township community is very different from a settled rural community, with its established work patterns, clearly marked out roles and obligations for men and women, and strong traditional power structures. In the townships, people have had to negotiate their own patterns and structures of community life while they have, at the same time, been involved in an ongoing struggle for survival.

Hostels

Hostels are a more difficult case. Should we see them as just a mass of individuals living in the same place? Or are there networks of mutual support, informal power structures and enough of a shared culture to think of them as communities? Certainly they make a strange form of community, with their constantly shifting populations, their lack of family ties and their lack of females. It is hardly surprising if such an unbalanced community develops a culture which is unstable and, at times, antisocial, leading to clashes both internally and with neighbouring communities. For anyone who wants to work within such a community, finding stable enough communication lines and negotiating structures presents a tough challenge.

Informal settlements

Due to the shortage of proper housing in both the urban and rural areas of South Africa, many people in this country live in so-called informal settlements. An informal settlement is a settlement that is not formally proclaimed as a township, and/or that does not consist of properly built houses with services such as tap water and water-borne sewerage. In informal settlements, the streets often do not follow the regular pattern that is the result of formal urban planning, but

follow a more complex and irregular pattern produced by the planning done by the residents themselves. Informal settlements do not only exist in urban areas – in fact, many rural South Africans live in such settlements.

It is important to distinguish between an informal settlement and a squatter settlement. Not all informal settlements are squatter settlements, and the reverse is also true. Squatter settlements come about when people occupy land illegally, in other words, against the wishes of the rightful owner. Some informal settlements are also squatter settlements. This occurs when homeless people invade a piece of land and then erect their shacks on this land. But not all informal settlements, or even the majority of them, fall into this category.

Informal settlements can also develop when the government allocates sites to homeless people and installs the most essential services, such as taps and toilets, on these sites. People then build their own houses (ie shacks) on these sites. Experience in other countries (especially Latin America) has shown that, if people are given security of tenure in the form of title deeds, and if the government helps them by providing loans and cheaper building materials, these settlements can be upgraded and can eventually resemble formal suburbs.

Not all residents in informal settlements are new arrivals to the city. Sometimes urban people live in informal settlements simply because it is cheaper to do so or because it is closer to their workplace than other formal townships. Often the small houses in townships cannot accommodate the children of the family as they grow up and marry. Such people are no longer prepared to live with their parents, or to pay high rents to live in converted garages or backyard shacks and so they move to an informal settlement. Movement into an informal settlement often goes hand-in-hand with the migration of a spouse or children to town.

It is also difficult to make generalisations about people living in informal settlements in other respects. For example, they are not necessarily unemployed, nor are they all employed in the informal sector. And by no means all of them are poor.

South Africa's many townships, hostels and other forms of settlement are deprived and distorted communities formed during the apartheid era; these settlements are still being rebuilt and reshaped to meet the needs of post-apartheid South Africa.

MAKING ABET WORK WITHIN URBAN SITUATIONS

By now, you are probably wondering why we have discussed city communities in so much detail. This is because it is, in fact, a subject which is directly relevant to your literacy or ABET teaching.

ACTIVITY 10

Can you think of ways in which you, as a literacy or ABET practitioner, would have to work differently with urban communities (compared with the way you would work in a rural community)?

- Who would your learners be?
- How would you know what they needed to learn?
- How would you let them know about your classes?
- How would you persuade them to attend your classes?
- Who do you need to have contact with in the community (ie who are the important people in the community)?
- With whom would you negotiate to obtain a classroom and other resources?

- Who would you report to at the end of your programme
  (ie to decide whether or not your programme had been a success)?

Because there is no one strong community in a city, but only a variety of smaller communities/associations, this makes the idea of working **with** a community as an ABET practitioner much more complicated. Since boundaries and power structures tend to be weakly defined, it is difficult to know who to begin speaking to, and where to seek local support. In fact, because communal groupings tend to be casual and overlapping, it is generally easier to make your contacts with the *formal* organisations in a neighbourhood. (For example: a local political organisation, a parent-teacher association, or a place of worship may provide a place where you can begin to ask questions and start negotiating an education project.) You may also be able to call on members of these organisations to support you in running your project. Generally speaking, in urban areas, ABET practitioners link up with formal, rather than informal, organisations.

Communicating with potential learners

The problem with this approach is that you may fail to make contact with people in the neighbourhood who do not have any links with formal organisations. Unlike rural communities, where *everybody* soon knows about *any* new event, in the city there are no communication channels which reach everybody. It is more difficult to communicate with potential learners in urban areas than it is in rural areas. You have to find out what the main organisations in the neighbourhood are and then decide which can best put you in touch with the learners you want to reach.

In a rural community, it is easy to get messages to your potential learners – but difficult to change attitudes and open up new avenues to people who are bound by traditional roles. In a city it is the other way round. Your potential learners are much less limited by traditions. The problem is to reach different groups of people and help them realise that your programme is for them. You cannot simply do as Mrs Radebe did (in our rural case study) and go to the chief for his approval, which everyone will then accept. Instead, you have to seek out a variety of people who have links and influence with the communities you wish to target.

Teaching students from diverse cultures

In an urban area your teaching approach has to allow for students from diverse cultures. The way you teach in the classroom will also be influenced by the different people in the class. In a city class you cannot expect everyone to know each other. Nor can you assume that they will have the same interests or ambitions, that they will have similar basic knowledge or the same basic assumptions about life. In a rural community, everyone shares more or less the same culture. In the city you will accept students from diverse cultures and you have to work out a teaching approach which allows for this.

Building on urban people's aspirations

In the urban areas, adults are often more motivated to attend ABET classes, as a result of changing social conditions and a competitive job market. Adults who are employed in the urban areas are likely to attend industry-based classes. However, because women tend to hold the most poorly paid jobs in the industrial section, industry-based programmes often exclude women. As a result,

urban women take advantage of programmes run by Public Adult Learning centres, NGOs or the *Kha ri gude* literacy campaign.

Communities in areas that are neither rural nor urban

In South Africa it is not always easy to neatly divide areas into the categories of "urban" or "rural". There are many areas which are neither urban nor rural. These areas were created during the apartheid era, when people were removed from so-called "black spots" (farming areas inhabited by Africans scattered among farms owned by whites). People who had previously worked as labourers on farms in the neighbourhood settled in these areas. People settled or remained there even though there were almost no local job opportunities. This was largely because they felt they had nowhere else to go. They could not go back to the farms either, because a lot of the farm work on commercial farms was now done by machines, so these people were often no longer needed to work on the farms.

Today, the problem with these areas is that they are densely populated (like urban areas), but without the workplaces and facilities of towns and cities. Initially, these areas did not have a single tarred street, electricity or street lights, no supermarket, hospital, magistrate's office or factory. Also, there are very few men in these areas. Most of the young men, and some of the younger women, are absent for most of the year (because they work in the towns and cities). Since 1994 serious efforts have been made to bring some modern facilities to such places, but they are still places of extreme poverty.

Such settlements cannot be clearly classified as either "urban" or "rural". They are, in fact, somewhere between the two. In terms of population, they should count as urban areas, since many are much bigger than towns in South Africa. Normally, if a place has a population of anything between 500 and 10 000 people, it is regarded as "urban". Another thing that would make it problematic to classify such settlements as "rural" is the fact that, although the people own goats, chickens and a few cows, they do not actually make a living from agriculture.

Communities that are created by migration

Now that we have discussed what we mean by the terms "rural" and "urban", we need to discuss the movement or migration of people from one kind of area to the other. Not all learners remain in a specific area forever. People often move between the rural and the urban areas. This process is a global phenomenon and is, at present, occurring more frequently; it is part of the increasing pace of life that now characterises the developing world.

The fact that people want to move (or migrate) to the urban areas is not hard to understand, because the conditions in the rural areas from which these people come are often much worse than conditions in the towns (see our discussion above). Many people improve their situation by migrating to town since the rural economy is often unable to provide them with employment and/or the necessary services. But when very large numbers of people move to the towns, the municipalities are often unable to provide them with either employment or acceptable housing and adequate services.

Most of the people who arrive in urban areas looking for work are very poor. In this section we shall examine how and why they migrate. We shall illustrate the main features of their migration process by examining the following case study.

Case study 2

Dennis, who is 24 years old, comes from Fernie Diepdale. This large settlement in Mpumalanga was originally a resettlement camp for people who were removed as part of the apartheid policy from their homes in the "white" farming areas. Although the place has seen some development since then, there is terrible unemployment in the area. Most of his family still lives there. He came to Johannesburg to look for work about four years ago, but he left his wife, Fikile, and his one child, behind in Fernie Diepdale. He is at present living with another family in Alexandra. He does not want his wife and child to come and live with him in town, mainly because it is too expensive to live here. "In Fernie Diepdale we can still get things such as water and firewood for free, and we can grow vegetables. Here in Alexandra I have to pay for everything" he says. He also worries about the future. He says the city is not a good place for old people, and that he would not like to grow old in Alexandra. Dennis visits home once every month, and takes presents, as well as money, back for his wife and child.

However, Fikile is not so eager to continue living in Fernie Diepdale. Although she realises that life in the city is much more expensive, she is certain that she would be able to earn some money selling vegetables in Johannesburg, and she believes that this would allow them to meet the extra expense of living there. "There is more cheap housing for poor people in Johannesburg, our family should move there to put our name on the waiting list for houses," she says.

ACTIVITY 11

- When Dennis moved to Johannesburg, did he intend to stay there permanently?
- Do you think Dennis hopes to stay in Johannesburg?
- How will Fikile, his wife, influence his decision if she gets her way?
- Does Dennis still regard the rural areas as "home"? (For example, does he try to visit there as often as possible)?

This story demonstrates a number of common features of the migration process of poor people.

It is apparent from the story that Dennis does not intend to live in Johannesburg permanently. He has left his family behind in Fernie Diepdale and returns as regularly as possible to visit him. He plans to go back to Fernie Diepdale when he retires.

Dennis hopes to eventually end up going back to where he started from, in Fernie Diepdale. He says he does not want to grow old in Alexandra. Many poor people who migrate to urban areas eventually return to their places of origin in the rural areas. We call this process *circular migration*. Circular migration means that people eventually return to their places of origin.

But what about Fikile? What will happen if Fikile gets her way? We think that if she can convince Dennis that she is right, the whole family will settle in Johannesburg. If this happens, Dennis and

Fikile will not go back to live in Fernie Diepdale. We refer to this kind of migration as *permanent migration*.

The experience of Dennis and Fikile is fairly common in South Africa. As a result of the old colonial and then apartheid system of migrant labour, we have always had a large flow of circular migrants between the towns and rural areas. Since the scrapping of influx control in 1986, all of the official restrictions on permanent settlement in the urban areas have disappeared (although, of course, the lack of affordable housing is still a major problem). We can consequently expect many more people to settle in town permanently.

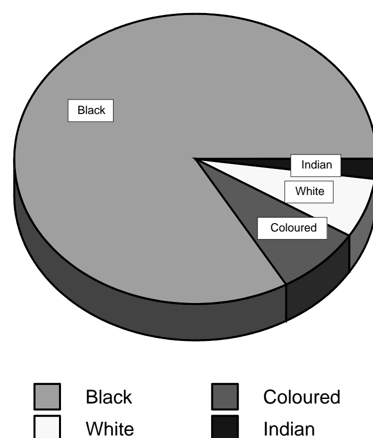
It is possible that Dennis will go and live in one of the informal settlements that have developed around Johannesburg. Fikile might then come and join him from time to time, leaving the child behind in the care of a relative such as a grandmother. If things go well, they might fetch their child to come and live with them.

But, of course, something might go wrong. Dennis might, for example, lose his job. In that case, they might have to return to Fernie Diepdale. Poor people who move from the rural areas to the cities experience a great deal of insecurity. They are usually unskilled and they are therefore the first people to become redundant. They often do not own the house in which they live, so they have no security of tenure in the form of a title deed. This is why they try to maintain links with their areas of origin.

Dennis and Fikile, for instance, will probably try to keep their house in Fernie Diepdale. They will visit their relatives often, and take presents for them, so that their relatives will be under an obligation to help them if something goes wrong in their life. In many ways, we can describe their continuing connection to their rural community as a form of insurance.

It is clear, though, that the difficulties of a "circular" lifestyle (as a result of circular migration) do not always influence men and women equally. For example, caring for children and other household tasks are usually regarded as the woman's responsibility. We can therefore assume that they would prefer to live in an urban area because of the possibility of a higher standard of services (eg tap water and medical care). Another problem is that women who stay behind in the rural communities often worry that their husbands will leave them for someone they meet in the city.

COMMUNITIES AND YOUTH



In South Africa youth make up a big component of most communities. In 2008 there were nearly 14 million youths aged between 15 and 29. Of these youths, some 85% are black, 8% coloured, 7% white and 2% Indian.

Who do we mean when we use the word "youth"?

We use the word "youth" quite a lot. But who do we mean? We obviously need to know precisely who we are talking about if we are going to target policies at them. It will be equally important for you, as an ABET practitioner, to have a clear picture of who you are hoping to work with.

ACTIVITY 12

- When you hear about "the youth" or read about "the youth", who do you think of?
- Do you think of young people within your own family – or even of yourself?
- Do you think of young people you actually know, or of people you see in the news?
- Do you think of all young people? Or do you think of a particular type of young person? If so, what kind of person?
- At what age do you think "youth" starts and when does it end?

Write down your answers to these questions.

These are quite difficult questions to answer. We tend to think of different young people depending on how, when and where the questions are asked. But our confusion is not at all surprising, because in present-day South Africa we use the word "youth" in two very different ways.

Two meanings of "youth"

The first way of using the word "youth" is to mean all "young people". We might have an argument about exactly what age youth starts and finishes at, but we could broadly agree to use "youth" to mean anyone who is not a child anymore, but who is not an adult. This means teenagers and people in their early twenties.

However, in South Africa we also use the word "youth" to mean "violent young men". This meaning of the term "youth" in South Africa is also a highly politicised term. During the anti-apartheid struggle, and particularly after 1976 (when there was a major revolt against apartheid started by schoolchildren in the townships of our largest city, Johannesburg, in which hundreds of children were shot down by the police), youth were seen either as the foot soldiers, the "Young Lions", of the democratic struggle against the police and army on the township streets. An alternative view was the government's and media's portrayal of these young men as the "lost generation" who had boycotted and burnt their schools, destroyed their own future and become violent and delinquent in their self-defeating victory over apartheid. Since 1994, many of these "youth" have come to be regarded as criminals rather than political activists.

(Note that there is a third meaning of "youth" in political organisations that have youth "wings" where the upper age limit may be as high as 35, an age well beyond the normal meaning of the term "youth".)

Youth as a "problem"

Youth are often seen as a social and economic "problem". Given the large number of youth in South Africa, if there is a "problem of youth", it is a very big problem. Many youth are considered

to be “marginalised”. Education is often seen as part of the solution to this “problem”. So what role could you, as an ABET practitioner, play in developing youth?

What do we mean by “marginalised youth”?

A child has a place in society through being a member of a *family*. Gradually, he or she becomes one of the children in the local *community* and in the local school. Adults also tend to find a place in society through being members of a family and of a community. But an adult can also find a place through a work role, and an adult is connected to the wider society through sharing in its *culture* and through *citizenship*.

In the years of “youth”, between childhood and adulthood, a person’s place in society becomes less clearly defined. A youth may leave his or her place in the “family of childhood”, before forming a “family of adulthood”. Similarly, he or she will eventually leave school before finding an alternative role in society through paid work. As they grow up, young people no longer want to keep their place in the community as children, but it is difficult for them to fit into adult roles, especially in a community which is dominated by an older generation or in which there are few employment possibilities. At the same time, youth often rejects traditional culture, which values age and experience. Understandably, youth prefer “youth culture”, which values youth and which expresses the interests and concerns of youth. Young people do not experience the benefits of adult citizenship immediately (eg knowing that you will get a pension in forty five years’ time is unlikely to mean very much to you when you are still a teenager). So they may not feel much of an obligation towards the institutions and the laws of the state.

Young people have to leave their childhood ties (or connections) behind. However, if they leave *all* the ties behind at the same time, they can find themselves alone on the “margins” of society; without a family, a job, or a place in a community. In this situation they are almost completely helpless, since society has little reason for taking any notice of them. As a result, they will begin to lose any sense of commitment towards society, its culture, or its laws. They may then begin to steal the things they cannot obtain legitimately. Or, at least, the members of mainstream society begin to fear that this will happen. The worry is that, when youth become marginalised, it is impossible to reach out to them and re-integrate them with society.

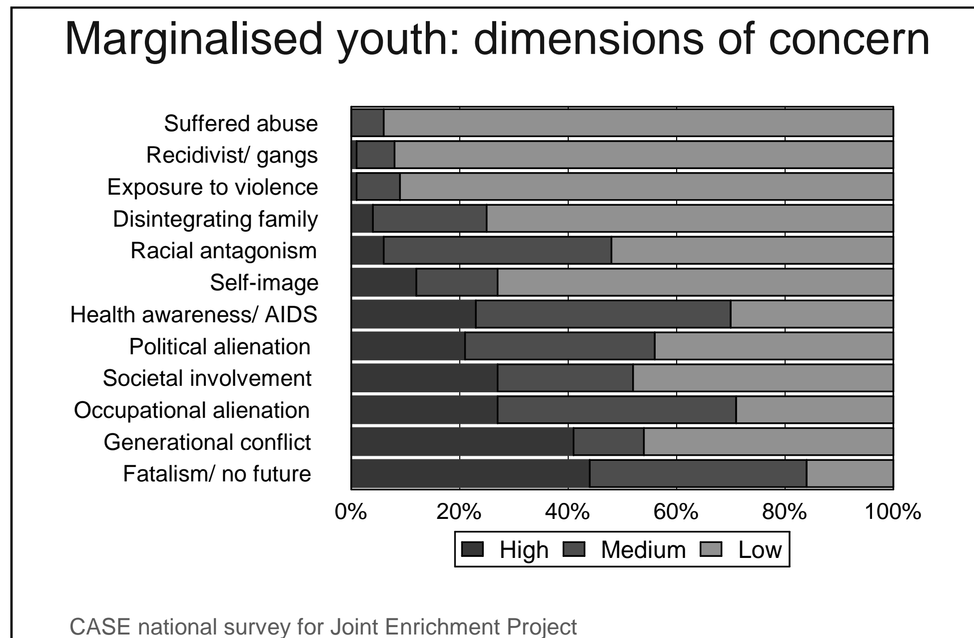
What are the causes of the marginalisation of South African youth?

As we know, many South African communities remain in deep poverty, in spite of the gains since democratisation in 1994. About 35% of the population live in informal housing and 40% do not have access to a flush toilet. Amongst black South African youth, more than 75% wished they had got more education (finance is usually the major hindrance to furthering their studies). Many young people are marginalised by the general lack of opportunities for work (as many as 62% of black youth were unemployed in 2000) and many young women are marginalised by unplanned pregnancies, which remove them from education and work (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2000). In communities such as these, we have every reason to expect to find a marginalised youth, particularly since the legacy of damage inflicted on communities by apartheid remains unhealed. So the reality is that there are many youth who feel alienated from their families and their schools, are in conflict with the older generation, and see no future in the workplace (because there are no jobs). They are entirely without hope – either for the future generally or for the country.

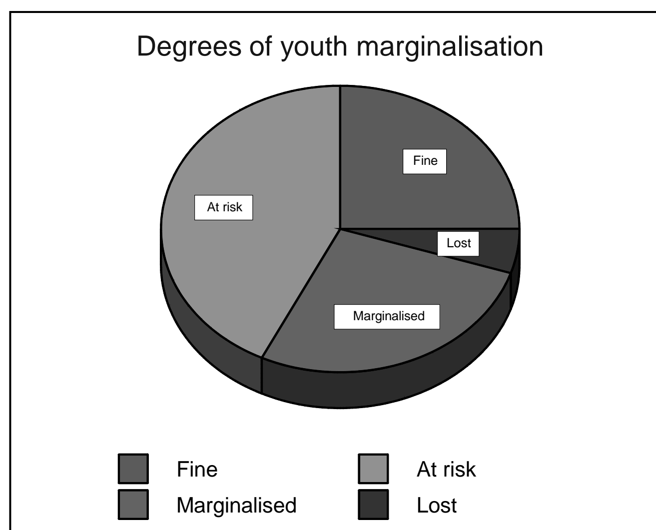
A survey of youth marginalisation

One of the most useful analyses of the youth "problem" in South Africa was the national survey of just over 2000 youths (people aged between 16 and 30) undertaken in 1992 by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry.

The survey examined the extent to which youth were marginalised and identified a number of factors that raised the concerns shown in the chart below (high means the most serious, low the less serious):



The survey made it clear that youth marginalisation is a national problem. Youth of all races were pessimistic about their own future, and that of South Africa, although African and coloured youth scored higher on generational hostility than Asian youth, and much higher than white youth; whites were less marginalised in their occupational situation, because relatively few are unemployed, but they scored higher on racial antagonism. Young women scored notably higher than men on the societal involvement dimension, that is, they were more isolated, and less organisationally involved, than men, but they had a better self-image than men. People in informal settlements were those who had most fear of violence and were the most socially isolated, although they experienced the lowest racial antagonism.



The degree to which youth were marginalised is shown in this chart, using four categories: Fine, At risk, Marginalised, and Lost.

"Fine" means that the young people in this category are fully

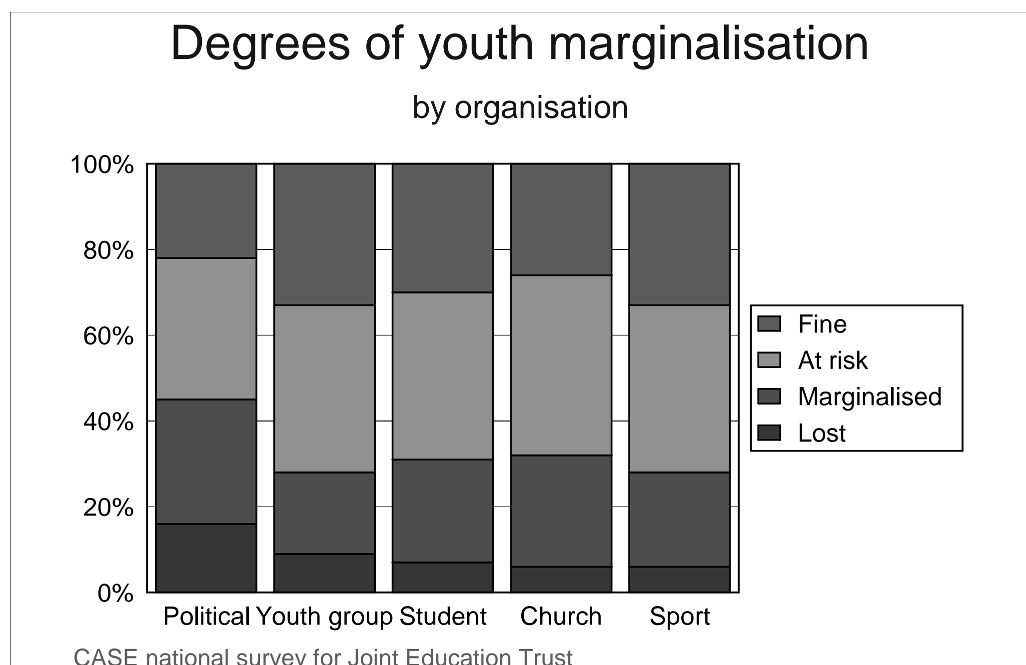
engaged with society. These people account for a quarter (25%) of South Africa's youth, and do not need intervention – but they need to be identified, so that they can be trained in peer education and leadership courses.

"At risk" means that, although the youth in this category are functioning, they are showing signs of alienation on a few dimensions of concern. They account for 43% of the overall sample. They are in danger of becoming marginalised if no action is taken.

"Marginalised" youth are those most in need of urgent intervention. They amount to more than a quarter (27%) of youth, being people who score high on many of the twelve dimensions of concern. This group was in urgent need of appropriate programmes to reintegrate them into society.

"Lost" youth are the 5% (one in twenty young people) who scored high on nearly all of the twelve dimensions of concern. They are so marginalised that they have lost contact with the major portion of mainstream society and are beyond the reach of most youth development programmes; these youth are likely to end up as criminals.

One of the interesting findings that came out of this analysis was that membership of a political movement did not stop youth from being marginalised. Indeed, the percentages of "lost" and "marginalised" youth were appreciably higher in political than in non-political organisations (non-political organisations being youth groups, people in school and other educational institutions, churches and sports organisations).



This has significant implications for sites of intervention. Sports groups had low proportions of "lost" and "marginalised", as did church associations followed by student and youth groups. Another finding, perhaps self-evident, is that the more kinds of organisation a young person participates in, the lower his or her marginalisation. Out-of-school youth were more likely to be marginalised than "in-school youth".

In 1994 CASE was commissioned by the National Youth Development Forum and the Ministry of Education to research this area. One of the purposes of this study was to establish which youth might have the potential to re-engage in education and training programmes.

The **“hard to reach”** group scored high on alienation across socioeconomic, psychological, familial, political, educational and other variables. It included more women (40%) than men (33%), and more youth from rural areas (43%) than urban. Some 44% of youth living in informal settlements are hard to reach and are poorly educated.

CASE’s major recommendations for the youth included:

(1) The need for a holistic approach to youth development

Simply addressing economic development does not meet the requirements of emotional or mental wellbeing. Education and information are also necessary (CASE found, for example, that even youth who were “fine” were often very ignorant about the risk of AIDS). A variety of issues have to be tackled simultaneously. Education courses or economic skills training must include a life-skills package, which educates youth about family planning and AIDS awareness and provides psychological interventions where appropriate. Holistic programmes are sensitive to the needs of particular sub-groups, be they young women, youth from informal settlements, or people from a particular region (indeed, programmes are probably best designed at a local and regional level).

(2) Different strategies are needed for different levels of marginalisation or accessibility

A wide range of strategies are needed for different categories and groups of youth. This allows for differentiated programmes to be developed. It also allows for “fine” and “at risk” youth to participate in programmes that strengthen their positive potential and to train them as peer educators and facilitators of those who are marginalised (this was one of the strategies adopted in 2008 by the *Kha ri gude* literacy campaign, which recruited a large number of youth as literacy educators).

(3) Many programmes need to be specially targeted at women

A significant number of young women who did not complete their education because of pregnancy.

(4) Educators and social workers need to be trained to cope with a wider range of learners and learning situations

WHAT CAN ABET EDUCATORS DO?

It is clear that, while youth certainly have problems, the majority of youth are “fine” or not yet marginalised (though they may be “at risk”). ABET programmes can do much to draw youth into their activities or to run programmes through the organisations – sports clubs, churches, etc – that have youth members. ABET also need also to be incorporated within larger programmes of re-engagement if it is to make an impact on marginalised youth.

There are serious youth problems, but they can only be effectively addressed if equally serious efforts are made to understand their complexity, and the diverse circumstances in which they arise. As an ABET practitioner, it is not enough to devise an education programme for all “youth”. Instead, it is necessary to understand the problems of specific sectors of youth and to devise programmes which address their specific needs. ABET practitioners should address not only youth’s education needs, but their broader needs for opportunities to re-engage with mainstream society. Youth will be apathetic and resistant towards education programmes that fail to recognise the seriousness of these other social needs.

So educating youth presents the ABET practitioner with an immense challenge: on the one hand, we are talking about a body of students who have very a very wide range of needs, many of which are not directly educational; these students may have suffered many setbacks in life, and may

have many reasons to be distrustful of promises of success. On the other hand, working with youth gives you the opportunity to work with students who have great energy, determination and the potential for achievement.

The greatest challenge for the ABET practitioner is to understand the circumstances and needs of these students and to devise programmes and teaching strategies which will put motivation behind that energy, direct that determination, and draw out that potential.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES IN PRESENT DAY SOUTH AFRICA

We have discussed a variety of communities that exist in South Africa today. Even with the end of apartheid, the impact of its policies, and years of bitter struggle, have left many communities damaged and under-resourced. How can literacy and ABET contribute to community building so that communities can help to develop themselves and South Africa?

Communities – if they are to help themselves and develop South Africa – need to be able to act in an intelligent and organised way. But how? In many communities the possibilities for education and training programmes are drastically restricted by low levels of literacy and numeracy, and by a general lack of basic education. People need to know how to run meetings, how to get things done between meetings, how to keep accounts. They need to understand how local government works, how the law works, how businesses work. Few communities have an adequate supply of people experienced in such things. Consequently, there is a desperate need for rapid development of skills of all kinds, and particularly the skills of organising, planning and participation.

ACTIVITY 13

What kinds of skill and knowledge are needed in your community?

How can ABET help people?

A basic education programme will aim to give people the skills they need in order to participate in the ongoing development of South Africa.

The benefits are great and include the following:

Social benefits

As the first case study showed, ABET helps people to participate in social, political and community events. It is worth remembering that illiteracy often prevents people from participating in the affairs of their communities, or from being elected to community organisations.

However, education also provides an important communal activity in itself. Bringing people together for classes is an important way of bringing the community together. When people are learning together in classes, they are more likely to share their concerns and, as a result, initiate new projects.

To achieve this kind of outcome, we need to stop thinking of education as a set of separate formal topics, each set out in its own textbook. Education must be made relevant to students' lives, and must draw on a range of sources. It must also include critical thinking and discussion.

Economic benefits

The relationship between education and the economy is also important. In case study 1 we saw that Mrs Radebe's class established a vegetable garden, and then realised that they could sell their extra vegetables. This shows us that ABET can, in fact, help develop local economies and encourage people to become entrepreneurs. The link between ABET and bead work or poultry farming, for example, is important.

Development

Development workers have found that a community does not necessarily continue to develop once a development project comes to an end. However, when a community participates in a project, and when basic education is part of the project, development is far more likely to continue after the project has been completed and the development workers leave the area. Global experience has shown that development projects cannot simply be imposed on communities. A development project will not succeed in the long term unless the people who are supposed to benefit from the project understand and appreciate it and, most importantly, participate in it. Unless ABET and development are linked, communities can seldom participate in development in a meaningful way, and will not acquire the skills needed to continue with the work on their own.

How different communities respond to educational interventions

Different communities will respond differently to literacy and ABET interventions. The very characteristics of different communities, rural or urban, close-knit or not, will influence how people respond to education and how they use newly gained knowledge and skills.

For example: what happens if people migrate? Will their learning still be useful? Can Mrs Radebe's rural learners use what they learn if they moved to a city?

We saw that Mrs Radebe's learners wanted to learn skills that are useful for their particular **situation** or **context**.

As an ABET practitioner, you will have to look at the situation or context of your learners and find out whether the courses you teach can respond to their particular context. For adults this is particularly important: adults will not be interested in learning about something that is irrelevant to their everyday lives.

If Mrs Radebe worked in an Adult Learning Centre in Johannesburg, she would have had different learners with different kinds of problems. However, they would still need to learn certain **core skills** such as reading, writing, numeracy and communication.

Would Mrs Radebe's learners be able to **transfer** the skills and knowledge that they had acquired to other situations? We think they would. The ability to think about problems and to come up with solutions is a useful skill no matter where you live. Certainly some of the problems in Johan-

nesburg or Durban or Port Elizabeth will be different from the problems in the Transkei, or in rural areas of Limpopo or KwaZulu-Natal, but you will still need to think about how to solve them.

We know that the women were more confident after attending Mrs Radebe's classes. This is an important point. Confidence is useful no matter where you live. And skills such as reading, writing and working with numbers would be useful wherever you go. These are basic skills that all adults should have. So, although Mrs Radebe had to adapt what she taught to fit the problems the women experienced in the village of Xhugxwala, her learners nevertheless learned some core skills that they could use wherever they lived.

We hope that you can now see that ABET is not only about reading and writing and calculating. It is also about helping people with the problems they experience in their communities. It is about jobs and about preparing for further education. And it is about making decisions.

The ABET practitioner and the community context

As an ABET practitioner, you need to understand the contexts in which people live, since these will have a direct effect on the arrangements you make for your classes, and the skills you teach. You will need to understand how the community you teach in works. You will often be in the position of an outsider dealing with a group, or groups, who are not sure how to assess you. You may often be unsure about what to do. You may feel inadequate and lonely. For all these reasons you need to be able to contact the right people in the community; that is, the people you can work with – the people who will support you and give you honest feedback.

You need to be able to identify

- various *groups* within the community so that you can assess their educational needs and consider what kinds of programme would benefit them most
- resources available within the community that you can use in your programme (buildings, equipment, people, etc)
- leaders and organisers of the community – you will need to negotiate with these people
- tensions within the community, which might influence your programme
- lines of communication that you can use to contact your potential learners
- focal points of community life, where things are discussed and decided

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STUDY UNIT 3

What is development?

INTRODUCTION

As an adult educator, you will be faced – both directly and indirectly – with development issues. You will also be expected to make what you teach relevant to your learners' lives. Adults learn best when what they learn helps them to make immediate improvements to their quality of life. Of course, this can only happen if the educator has an adequate understanding of what we mean by "development".

An adult educator is also a community developer. You will be doing more than bringing basic education and training to people who have had little or no education. You will also be helping to empower your learners to develop their communities. This is why you need to have a good understanding of development issues.

AIMS OF THE UNIT

- To examine some of the theories of development
- To discuss the indicators of poverty and development
- To discuss some of the ways in which development is being encouraged in urban and rural areas

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Describe and explain the concept of "development".

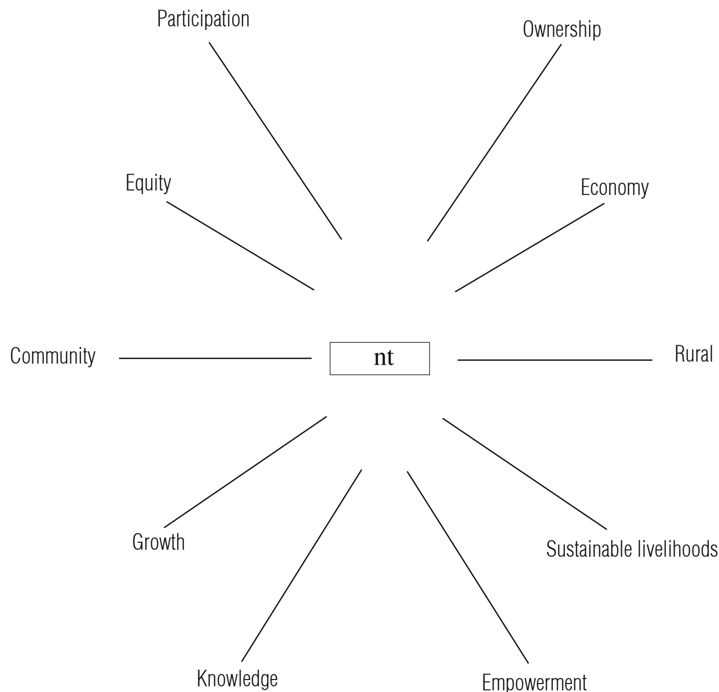
You will demonstrate that you can do this by

- defining, in writing, what is meant by the word "development"
- explaining the different concepts of development
- describing some of the differences between rural and urban living and discussing the implications of this for adult basic education and training

HOW DO WE DEFINE DEVELOPMENT?

The word "development" is used often in South Africa – almost everyone (government, political parties, business, trade unions, civil society) uses it, wants it, and claims to be making it happen. But what is "development"?

Here are some words among many that we hear linked to development.



A definition of development

There are numerous definitions of development, but most of these include the following:

- Development is a process of social, economic and political change that will either improve things or enable something to reach its full potential. These processes can operate at various levels – international, national, local, community, organisational or personal.
- Improvements are often described in terms of society, the economy, the environment and institutions. In each of these areas there are indicators or criteria for measuring these improvements.
- What is regarded as a sign of development varies and depends on a number of assumptions.

What leads to development or lack of development?

Development or lack of development is closely linked to certain things.

For example, it is easy to assume that wealth is linked to development. Strong economic growth in a country will help it develop because, obviously, this means that the country possesses more goods and greater wealth. However, this is not always true. If only a small part of the population

controls most of the wealth, then the larger part of the population may not be benefiting from this wealth at all. In fact, serious inequalities in wealth may lead to other things, such as crime and political instability, that hinder development.

Another connection and contradiction is the issue of how equality and fairness are linked to development. People sometimes ask the following sort of question: "Which is better: a wealthy society which has a big gap between rich and poor or a very equal society which is much less wealthy as a whole?"

Other debates occur about what should come first: should redistribution of wealth and resources come first or growth of the economy? At present, most countries seem to assume that growth should come before development; indeed, they assume that development can only happen as the result of growth.

Other factors that influence development are the natural resources available and the impact of diseases and epidemics (eg HIV/AIDS).

What are the commonly used indicators of development?

Economic
An increase in the Gross National Product (that is, the country produces more goods and wealth)
Per capita and family income adequate and rising
Unemployment low
Debt to other countries is low
People's basic needs are satisfied
Energy (in the cleanest form possible) is readily available and efficiently used
Hazardous waste is disposed of carefully
Adequate foreign investment
Institutional
Political freedom and equality
Regular free and fair elections
The country is politically autonomous
Human rights exist for all
Adequate amount of foreign and humanitarian aid given to other countries
Social
Poverty is eliminated
Equity (there is not too big a gap between the rich and poor, the powerful and less powerful)
Female/male wages are the same
Child weight is normal
Life expectancy high and increasing

Low child mortality rate
Clean water available for all
Sanitation available for all communities
Health care is available to all
Crime and corruption are infrequent
Low murder rate
Primary schooling (general or basic education) is available and all children complete their primary education
Secondary education is the norm
Low or insignificant illiteracy rate
Family planning is available and effective (low population growth)
Adequate expenditure on research and development
High percentage of the population lives in urban areas
Adequate housing for all
Most houses have a telephone
Internet use high
Environment
Key ecological systems are maintained
Arable land remains fertile and productive
Woods and wilderness areas are protected
High species diversity
Deserts and arid areas are not spreading
Fish farming and other forms of aquiculture are practised
Carbon dioxide emissions reduced
Wood harvesting is controlled and sustainable
Pesticides used judiciously
Fertilisers not overused
Proper sewage disposal
Population is not concentrated along the coast

Different ways of seeing development

A development model is a way of understanding how a society develops. Such a model is usually a description of the changes that usually occur as a society develops. The word "usually" is important here because when we speak about a model, we are not describing any specific society, but presenting a *general* picture of what happens in most developing societies. A model of development is based on our ideas about development, ideas that are not linked to any specific society or country.

A development model or theory describes the changes that have occurred in a number of developing societies. As such, a theory or model of development can be seen as a story that describes how a society develops. This "story" tells us how societies develop and it may also explain why some societies do not develop. In other words, it also gives us an idea of what can go wrong in the development process. A theory of development, therefore, must be able to explain to us why some societies are so poor and others so rich.

You may have thought about how the work you do is related to development. You may also have thought about your role as an educator (you have to help the communities you work with overcome obstacles to their own development). An understanding of these theories can give you an idea of how the work that you do fits into the broader picture of development. Such an understanding will also give you an idea of some of the different constraints on development. By this we mean factors that limit how much a society can develop at a specific time and what obstacles need to be removed before development can be achieved.

History of the idea of development

The idea of development is closely linked to the idea of progress. This is the belief that human society can in fact improve and continue to improve. It is important to remember that this belief is a fairly new one: it has certainly not been common to all societies. This idea of progress is particularly associated with the rise of the modern western world and has now been accepted as unquestionably true by virtually all countries, whose leaders and citizens want to feel that they can look forward to a better future.

The belief in progress originally had much to do with the rise of powerful nation states and the increasing wealth and prosperity that came with the growth of industrial capitalism and scientific knowledge. Alongside this grew a belief that, from the viewpoint of western Europe, some societies were "advanced" while others were "backward", some were "civilised" while others were "barbarian", some were "modern" while others were "traditional". This idea of development as "growth through stages", leading to a fuller and more advanced form of society, is often called the "evolutionary" idea of development.

The first development theory – modernisation

Actual theories about development only became important in the middle of the last century after World War II, in the period when most of the western colonial powers granted independence to their former colonies in Africa and Asia.

The first important theory of development – the "modernisation theory" – assumed that the way in which the western countries had developed was the best (in fact the only possible) pattern for poorer countries to follow. The aim of development, therefore, was to achieve a western-style society and economy as fast as possible.

Modernisation theory tells us how society changes from underdeveloped to being a developed modern society. It tells us that there are a number of constraints within a society that prevent development from happening.

This "modernisation" approach to development continues to be very significant in development thinking and development programmes. Historically, both capitalist and communist development thinkers shared "modernisation" beliefs: progress was essential and would be achieved through economic growth and industrialisation.

According to this view, the underdeveloped regions of the world are simply at the early or "traditional" stage of development. The transfer of knowledge, technology and capital from the "advanced" societies to less advanced societies will speed up their advance through various stages of development. These transfers (or "diffusion") will bring "backward" societies to a point of economic "take-off", after which progress will be self-sustaining, and a high-consumption, welfare-type society will emerge as it has done in the advanced western countries of the North and in places like Japan.

FROM A TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

TO A MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Modernisation theory tends to assume that productivity is synonymous with development and emphasises large-scale industrial production. Although modernisation theorists knows that small groups of people take advantage of and benefit most from this kind of development, they argue that the benefits of the system will "trickle down" to reach everybody – eventually. People whose way of life does not fit the model of modernisation – for example, traditional tribal people – are considered backward and unimportant and their culture and rights are threatened and sidelined by "progress".

A major problem with this model of growth is that it consumes a large percentage of the world's natural resources, resources that cannot be replaced. Life on earth would collapse if every society were to copy a western lifestyle.

ACTIVITY 1

Look at the two groups of photographs and then think about the way of life depicted in each photo group. Tick off whether you think each society depicted by the photograph has the characteristics listed on the form on the next page.

Then think about your own society. Answer the same questions about the place and society you live in.

Do you think that the people in the photos:	Group 1		Group 2		Own country	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are expected to conform and all act the same?						
Want to keep everything unchanged and as it was in the past?						
Are superstitious?						
Prefer to live in rural areas?						
Are unable to make money by using modern methods and machinery?						
Live in a world where jobs and positions are decided on the basis of birth and gender?						
Are governed by strong customs and traditions?						

Our response

You probably answered "yes" to all these questions when you looked at the first group of pictures and "no" to all these questions when you looked at the second group of pictures. The first group of photographs depict a traditional society and the second group a modern society. We are not sure what your answers look like as far as your own society is concerned – your answers here will depend on where you live and the type of community you live in.

Underdevelopment theory

When the development plans for the newly independent countries were implemented – from the 1950s onward – they did not produce all the good things promised. As a result, "Third World" leaders and thinkers began to question the mainstream development theories of the West. In the mid-1960s the modernisation theory came under attack.

These people argued that developed countries prevent the development of the "Third World". The newly independent states could not develop along the same model as Europe and North America, because the "Third World" countries were poor and powerless as a result of the West's own development processes. In fact, the very same things that had contributed to the West's development were the main causes of "Third World" misery. This was a significant insight, because it recognised that being "underdeveloped" was not just an accident of history, but the result of "development" processes happening elsewhere in the world.

While people in the "Third World" were still committed to the struggle to overcome underdevelopment and achieve development, they no longer thought this could happen without a radical change in the global economic and political system.

The “Third World” suffered as it did as a result of its dependence on the major powers of the world economy, powers that had shaped the economies of the “Third World” to suit the needs of western capitalist development. Development in the “Third World” was therefore only possible on condition that this relationship of dependency was either changed dramatically or ceased entirely.

Underdeveloped countries were also thought to be “dependent” in another way too. Their involvement in world trade was usually limited to exporting a few primary products. (Primary products are raw materials such as farming crops, or minerals such as iron or copper, which have not been processed in industrial firms or factories.) This means that:

- The profits underdeveloped countries get from selling primary products are fixed by world markets and the needs of those countries that consume and process these products.
- Underdeveloped countries do not have the opportunity to make the really big profits which come from processing these primary products into finished goods.
- They have to import expensive finished products from outside their own economies since they do not have the means to produce these goods internally.

Even those small groups of people (the local elites) within underdeveloped countries which did profit in these situations were usually “dependent” on foreign companies or the governments for their livelihood, and very little of their wealth found its way into the economies of the underdeveloped countries.

Like modernisation theory, dependency theory puts most emphasis on economic growth for development. But the story it tells is very pessimistic.

“Neo-liberal” model of economic growth

Although some people think the international economic system is so unfair that developing countries should have nothing to do with it, others say that participating in the international economic system is the best way to achieve development. These “neo-liberals” claim that all the different types of trade, and the competition between producers across the world in fact create the best environment for everyone to achieve economic growth; this is because, in this system, all countries eventually find out which products or resources they can trade, sell, or exchange for the most benefit. According to this point of view, every economy or country has something (or a range of things) that they can trade better and more profitably than anyone else in the world markets. This is called the “theory of ‘comparative advantage’”.

This approach argues that everyone who participates in the global free market benefits – including developing countries. Their advice to poorer countries is:

- Do not try to protect your economy from global competition, because you will only be protecting the things that are not efficient and therefore (in the long term) expensive for your own people. (This advice is often heard in South Africa when people argue for removing “trade barriers” and ending “protectionism” of South African industries.)
- Make sure that your country is as attractive as possible for those with money and resources in the world economic system. (This advice is often heard in South Africa when politicians and business people say that we must create the “right conditions” to “attract foreign investment”.)

Not surprisingly, those with the most power and influence in the world economy tend to favour this approach to development. They often force poorer countries to implement their policies by making this a loan condition. These terms of conditions that come with loans to “Third World” countries are usually called “structural adjustment programmes” (SAPs) or “economic structural

adjustment programmes" (ESAPs), because the country that receives the loan has to adjust its economic structures and policies to make them as attractive as possible to foreign investors.

As in the modernisation approach, it is argued that the profits that are made in international trade will "trickle down" and that the whole economy will benefit, although the proponents of this view admit that these benefits take time to materialise. In fact, the first effects of this approach usually inflict more suffering on poor people in developing countries, because local industries and producers cannot compete with international companies and are therefore forced to close (leading to more unemployment).

Case study

The decline of the clothing and shoe industries in South Africa

South Africa once made much of the clothes and shoes that people wore. The rest were imported from other countries. For example, South Africa once produced about 30 million pairs of shoes a year (about half of the actual demand).

Unfortunately, with the ending of apartheid, South Africa's economy opened up to the world again. The impact of this, and the fact that goods such as shoes carried brand labels led to the decline of the South African shoe making industry and the retrenchment of thousands of leather workers.

Factors that directly led to this include the following:

- Leather tanneries in South Africa began to close down because they could not compete with the cheap hides that were being exported from Brazil and India to the rest of the world. (The hides from Brazil reflect the growth of the beef industry (to supply the meat for hamburgers in North America.) This, in turn, leads to the cutting down of the Amazonian rainforests to create pasture and this is believed to contribute to climate change.
- Most of the shoes made in South Africa were leather, and of a fairly modest and conventional design. Nike, Adidas and Reebok, through their advertising and marketing campaigns, began to destroy the local market. ("Nike and Adidas killed the South African shoe market" according to the National Organiser of the South African Clothing and Leather Workers Union.)
- Cheap imports from Indonesia, China and India priced South African shoes out of the market.
- The government, in obedience to the "free market" trade dictates of the major western industrial powers, lifted protective tariffs on the import of shoes in 1998.

A similar process happened with clothes and textiles. Cheap textiles and clothes began to be imported from China and other Eastern countries. They were cheap because labour was so cheap in these countries (no trade unions to protect workers' rights). They also had very efficient, well-trained work forces. People in South Africa bought them because they were cheaper than South African textiles and clothes. The shops and supermarkets that sold them were also happy because they made profits from the increased sales. However, the clothing factories began to suffer and workers were retrenched.

The situation is well captured in the cartoon on the next page.

A note on the term "neo-liberal". When one talks about a theory of the economy or development as being "neo-liberal" (new liberal) what do we mean? Unfortunately, the term "liberal" has many different meanings.

Historically, the term "liberal" was applied to people who wanted freedom from the old aristocracies that used to rule Europe. Liberals were part of a movement in favour of democracy and full political and economic rights for everybody. Most modern democracies, including post-apartheid South Africa, are liberal in this sense.

There is, however, a narrower and different sense of the word "liberal" that has been applied to economic systems in which governments are, in effect, prevented from interfering in the economic rights of individuals or the free market. In fact, this idea tends to be supported by conservatives rather than political liberals. Contemporary political liberals (like socialists and communists) usually accept that government should be allowed to regulate the economy in the interests of a fair and equal society (socialists and communists, of course, both argue for a high degree of state control of the market). "Neo-liberalism" was a new and extreme form of the free-market idea that was propagated by conservative governments in North America and Europe from the 1970s onwards. In South Africa "neo-liberal" is often used as a negative term, because many people believe it leads to significant inequalities in society.

"People-centred", "Community-based" and "Self-reliant, participatory" development

These approaches (which are all similar) stress the needs and participation of ordinary people and communities (and their organisations) in defining development, and in initiating and implementing projects. The emphasis on the role of local people developed as a critical response to modernisation development models (which assumed that development planning was best left to the "experts").

Many of these development plans designed by "experts" had, in fact, been drawn up far away from the actual people and situations they were meant to benefit, and failed to improve these people's lives in any meaningful and sustainable way. Development workers began to realise that effective development was only possible if the following applied:

- Addressed needs that local people actually felt were important.
- Used the resources (physical resources and local knowledge) of the local situation to design and implement projects.
- Fitted in with the local conditions.
- Had the support of local people.
- Was initiated and driven by local people and their interests.
- Was not entirely dependent on external inputs.

Proponents of a people-centred model for development also argue that development entails more than simply making the society look like an industrialised society. The people-centred model for development is a "micro" model. This means that it not only focuses on the larger structures (eg the economy), but also takes into account the people in this economy. For these theorists, development plans have to involve more than just tampering with the economy and hoping that, given enough time, wealth will somehow trickle down to the poor.

This approach says that the people in developing countries themselves have to decide on what action plan is best for them, which is why this approach is called a "people-centred model". This approach starts by getting people to define their needs and, in the process, empowers them to say how they think *they* can best remedy *their* situation.

Once they have analysed their needs, people are then in a position to decide on a strategy for development. For supporters of this approach, it does not really matter if people take on the idea that they want to develop through increased industrialisation or through any other means. The point is that they are empowered to take control of their own destinies and can therefore decide on a development strategy.

People-centred approaches are usually used for small-scale development such as the kind of development programmes undertaken by small NGOs, but are also suitable for large-scale development projects (eg those organised by local development forums or local government). This approach is, however, particularly suitable for a community where there is already an established presence of a development agency.

Other theories of development

Over the last three decades women's movements have stressed the importance of gender issues in development work; environmentalists have asked whether industrial growth can really be a long-term model; indigenous peoples have asserted their right to their own culture and aspirations; the roles of governments, economic markets and non-governmental civil society continue to be hotly debated; and development activists disagree about the impact of the world economy on the prospects for genuine development.

ACTIVITY 2

Try and complete the following table, outlining the similarities and differences between the major development theories:

Features of the major development theories						
Development theory	**Role of government**	**Definition of community**	**Role of civil society**	**Role of international money and investment**	**Environment**	**Technology**
Modernisation						
Underdevelopment						
Neo-liberal, economic growth						
People-centred						

Which development theory do you think fits the situation in your own country? Why do you say this?

HOW CAN DEVELOPMENT TAKE PLACE IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS?

Development activities are undertaken by a variety of agents in society – government, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations, community organisations and individuals.

All the different levels of government are involved in the South African government's development plans. The national government makes laws and policies about development, as does provincial government. There are numerous laws and policies that influence development and how it happens. The South African Constitution says that local government must help with economic and social development, and must make sure that people living in that area get basic services such as water and electricity. The Constitution also says that local government must help communities to get involved in local government.

Since 1994, the **national government** has had two main development related initiatives. The first was the *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) of 1994, which argued that economic growth should be accompanied by a more equal distribution of wealth and resources (including education and training). Everybody should have basic services such as water and electricity, as well as health services, and special assistance should be given to the poor, the disabled, old people and women. This programme was not run very effectively and was soon replaced by the much more conservative *Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy* (GEAR) in 1996. This plan made it hard for rural development to happen, because it says that the urban areas are where growth should happen. But the GEAR document did make the point that small businesses are a very important part of South Africa's economy. GEAR prioritised the growth of the economy over social welfare.

The **provincial governments** also had their own various development strategies, but they were usually modelled on GEAR.

Local government also helps with social and economic development by providing basic services such as water and electricity to the people living in the area. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 stipulates that local councils are responsible for community development, including health-care facilities (eg clinics), houses, schools, and sports fields and parks. People who do not have these services, or who have very inadequate services, are to be given priority.

Local government has to develop Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to work out who should get development help, and who should get it first. The local council must also look at how it can talk to communities about their needs more easily, so that it can find out from the communities themselves what their needs are, and what they want help with first. The Integrated Development Plan, which is a plan drawn up by the local council, is meant to cover all the needs of the communities living in the area and ways of meeting these needs. The local community is meant to have a say in the making of both short- and long-term plans.

The most important things about all these laws and policies are the following:

- Local government is very important in making sure development happens in communities, including in rural communities.
- Development must be "integrated" – everything must be taken into account. For example, if a company plans to build a hotel (which will create jobs), then this plan must take into account the impact this will have on the environment. Also, different government departments must work together.
- The government wants communities to be involved in deciding what development they want, and to be a part of deciding when this development should happen. They do this by working through their local councillors.

In 2000, the government created an *Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy:* this strategy was directed to making development in rural areas follow the same pattern as urban areas.

This plan says that it will help rural communities gain access to (or make it easier to obtain) the things they need – skills, better facilities, and special help for women, youth and disabled people. The plan makes the point that it is very important for the different government departments to work together. Local councils and district councils have a very important role to play in developing rural areas. The plan says that traditional leaders also have an important role, as do community-based organisations (CBOs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). But, to get the plan to work, the most important people are the communities themselves.

Because rural areas are so impoverished, development work would start in priority areas, called "nodes", of different sizes. The help that each area needs will be included in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the local council.

A number of other development plans have been made relating to land use and management.

In addition to the development activities sponsored by the state, a range of other organisations, churches, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and groups help development in various ways. Although their activities may be on a smaller scale than those driven by the state, because they are often very participatory and close to the community, these initiatives are often more effective.

Most development thinkers now agree that it is best if development in a community starts with the community itself. Each community needs to decide what development is needed in the com-

munity, and what development should happen first. For example, a community might decide that it needs water, roads, a clinic, and sanitation, but that water is the most important requirement and should happen first. But it is difficult for a whole community to decide this sort of thing. So the easiest way to get a decision made is to set up some kind of development group or committee to help in deciding on the priorities for action.

Remember that a development committee is there to decide on development for the whole community, and to decide what development should happen first. So it is very important for the development committee to know the problems and needs of the whole community. For example, if there are no women on the development committee, then the committee is unlikely to know what women's concerns are (eg having water closer to their homes so they do not have to walk so far to get it).

When the community has a plan, it needs to talk to its ward councillor, because he or she is responsible for development plans in the area. The local councillor has a responsibility to talk to the communities in his or her area.

The local councillor must take the community's plan to the local council. Every year, the local council looks at all of the plans for all of the communities in its area, and tries to fit these together. The local council then draws up a plan for the whole area, called an Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The local council decides what needs to be done in what order. The local council development plan is supposed to help the poorest communities first and is supposed to look after essential services, such as clean water, first. All of the local councils in a district then give their plans to the district council. Every year, the district council has to take all of these plans and fit them together. The district council plan is also supposed to help the poorest communities first.

Roleplayers in development work

There are a number of roleplayers in development, and these people can be divided into the following categories (Abrahams 1992):

◊ People who have money to spend on development

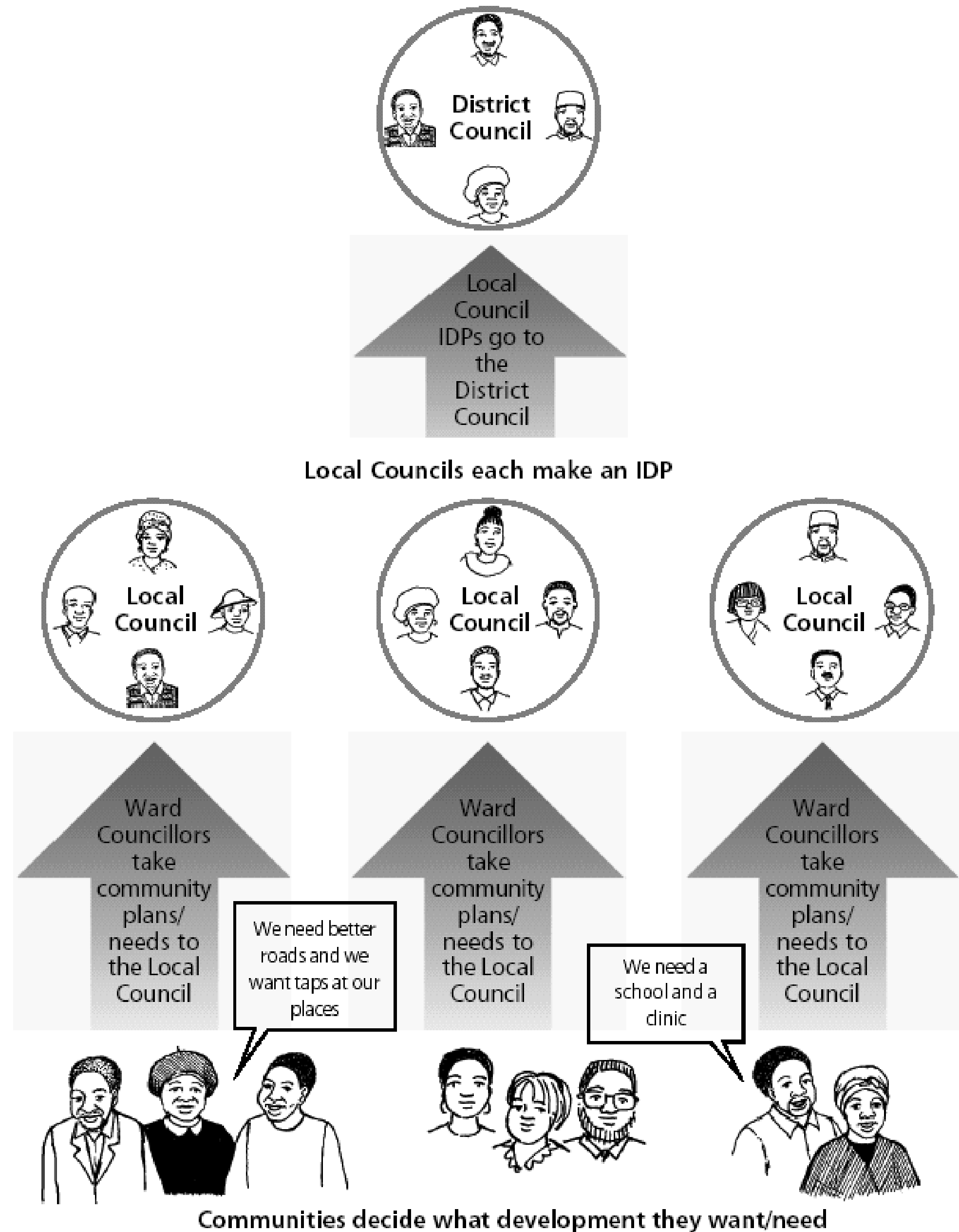
Having a development plan does not mean that development will happen – development costs money, and so money is needed to pay for the plan. Where does the money come from?

- government
- corporations
- banks
- religious organisations and communities
- funding or donor organisations

The money comes from government at different levels. Each province has its own budget, and each district council and local council has its own budget. Churches, international, national and local development NGOs and other bodies also raise money for development.

How an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is made

The District Council makes an IDP for the whole district



◊ People who do, implement, or support development work

- governments and their relevant departments
- international development organisations – some linked (directly or indirectly) to governments, some (directly or indirectly) to development banks, some to religious organisations, and various independent organisations

- non-governmental organisations
- community-based organisations
- organisations and consultants

◊ Citizens who participate in development projects or on whose behalf the development is done

- local government structures
- elected representatives in government
- civics
- youth development brigades
- women's organisations, youth organisations, religious and other organisations
- community-based development projects

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN DEVELOPMENT?

As you can imagine, adult education is a very important factor in successful development. Genuine development is dependent on the support of people and, in many cases, on energising a whole community to engage in various kinds of work and effort – discovering needs, gaining support, building community organisations and development structure. All these activities require various forms of adult education and training. So adult education as a facilitative process and as a means of developing knowledge and skills is an integral part of development. In fact, one can safely say that no development initiative will succeed without some form of adult education.

Of particular significance for literacy and adult basic education workers is the fact that a lack of literacy and basic education is, itself, a factor in underdevelopment. People without a basic education are usually the poorest of the poor. They have less likely to get any sort of job, and they cannot even get information from newspapers and books. They are less likely to get involved in community structures. In other words, their lack of education means that their voice is not heard. Though they may be very well aware of their own needs and the needs of the local community, they will not be able to express these needs in letters, petitions, or any form of writing. Although they may well be participants in a democracy, effectively their illiteracy and lack of education means they have no vote.

ABET practitioners can intervene both by teaching literacy and by providing a basic education that includes the knowledge content and skills the community needs. Knowledge content may, for example, include information on human and civic rights, health- and work-related information, and skills related to working in organisations and committees. Real development requires the participation of empowered people. How people gain the confidence to participate fully will obviously be heavily influenced by the participatory approach that a skilled ABET facilitator brings to literacy and ABET classes. A skilled ABET facilitator should be able to use different methods and techniques to encourage all learners' active participation in development projects.

Some of the development and adult education facilitators we have worked with describe a community development facilitator as follows:

A development facilitator is a person who helps the community to increase its personal and institutional capacity to access power and to mobilise and manage resources.

A development facilitator is someone who is actively involved in helping communities to form and create their own future and to transform the current situation without being dependent on outside "experts".

A development facilitator is a professional, resourceful, competent and skilful organiser, someone who can make realistic assessments of community issues and development needs within the changing situation of South Africa.

ACTIVITY 3

Now answer the following questions:

- What is the development history of your community? What development activities have taken place over the last ten to twenty years?
- Which different components (groups, divisions, interests) of the community can you identify?
- Has the community or any part of the community genuinely participated in development activities?
- What community resources/assets can you identify?
- How does illiteracy or lack of education influence development in this community?

FURTHER READING

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STUDY UNIT 4

What is the relationship between education and health?

INTRODUCTION

In the previous units, we discussed the importance of ABET in terms of education and development in South Africa. In this unit we shall look at certain aspects of health and the relationship between literacy, ABET and health. The key questions that we will examine are:

- What are the most important health-care issues for both rural and urban people?
- Do women have special health-care needs?
- In what way can the workplace influence health?
- What is the relationship between ABET and health?

AIMS OF THE UNIT

- To explore the relationship between health and literacy and basic education.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain the interaction between education and health.

You will demonstrate that you can do this by

- listing the typical correlations between health and education in rural, urban and workplace contexts
- describing the types of health education related to literacy and adult basic education and training
- describing basic HIV/AIDS health education issues

HOW DOES EDUCATION INFLUENCE HEALTH IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS AND THE WORKPLACE?

ACTIVITY 1

Look carefully at each of the photographs below. Each one illustrates a different aspect of health. What do you think these aspects are? Give each photograph a caption (ie a short heading) that summarises the aspect of health shown in the photograph.

Our response

Photograph 1 depicts the health problems associated with poverty, particularly in the rural areas. In this unit, we shall pay attention to problems such as malnutrition; we shall discuss how educating parents, especially mothers, helps to combat malnutrition.

Photograph 2 illustrates health care for mothers and babies. The health care of mothers and of children under six years of age is of vital importance. Later in this unit we shall discuss the importance of literacy and ABET for women and children's health.

Photograph 3 depicts the health problems associated with teenage pregnancy. We shall also discuss how ABET can help in tackling this problem.

Photograph 4 relates to health in the workplace. Later on in this unit we will discuss how ABET has a role to play here too.

Inadequate health services in rural areas

You will remember from Unit 2 that the rural areas are generally characterised by poverty and a lack of various services. Let us explore how poverty and lack of services can influence health.

We shall begin with a case study based on a United Nations Development Programme report. Mengu hospital is a small hospital in one of the rural areas of a developing country.

Case study

Mengu Hospital

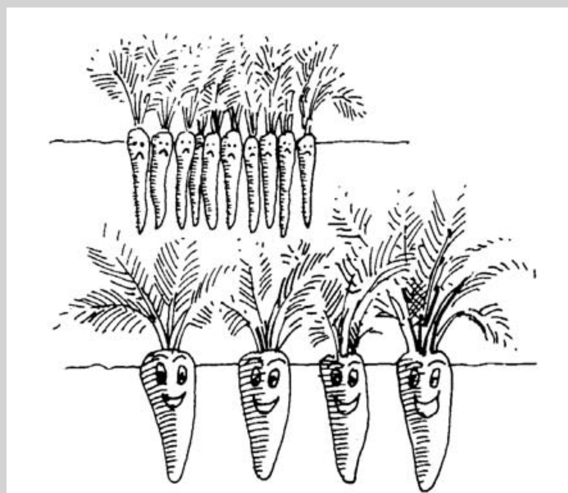
Mengu Hospital is situated in a rural area many miles away from the nearest town. It is in a very poor and dry part of the country and has to serve a large number of people.

In front of the hospital, we see several groups of mothers and small babies sitting on the grass under a tree in front of the hospital. They are waiting to see the doctor. Many of the babies are crying. Some of the mothers are feeding their babies. One of the women tells us that there is great deal of malnutrition in the area because of the poverty. This year, she says, the drought has made things much worse.

Inside the hospital, in the office and the entrance hall, there are various posters on the walls.

One poster shows a row of carrots that are cramped together and are looking extremely unhappy. Below them are four well-spaced carrots which are laughing.

Another poster just gives a warning:



Source: Morley & Lovel (1988:111)

In the labour ward, a patient who was admitted to the hospital today has just died. She was Mrs Mashamba, the 39-year-old wife of a poor farm worker.

Her twenty-year-old daughter, Lesego, tells us that Mrs Mashamba was pregnant, and that her unborn baby died as well. Mrs Mashamba did not want any more children, but she had no access to family planning information and services. She already had seven children, two of whom had died before they were five years of age.

Lesego tells us that it took Mrs Mashamba four hours to get to the hospital that morning and that Mrs Mashamba was bleeding heavily by the time she arrived. This was partly because of the inadequate public transport to and from her home, and partly because it takes more than an hour to drive to Mengu Hospital from there. Mrs Mashamba was admitted to hospital in a state of shock (because of the severe bleeding). Although she had started bleeding twice before during the past few weeks, she did not realise that there was cause for alarm.

At the hospital, only one-half litre of blood could be made available for transfusion. The doctor did a Caesarean section three hours after Mrs Mashamba was admitted to the hospital, but she died during the operation.

We ask ourselves, could Mrs Mashamba's life have been saved if things had been different?

ACTIVITY 2

Read the case study carefully and then answer the following questions:

- What services were lacking in the area where Mrs Mashamba lived?
- We know that Mrs Mashamba was poor.
- Why does poverty influence people's health?
- What do we know about Mrs Mashamba's children?
- As an ABET practitioner, what is your opinion of the two posters that were displayed in the hospital? Do you think they were appropriate?
- Make a list of all the things that led to Mrs Mashamba's death.

Our response

Compare your answers with ours.

(1) Many services were lacking in the rural area where Mrs Mashamba lived. Firstly, the health services in the area were totally inadequate. There were no family planning clinics. At the hospital itself, there was a shortage of blood available for a transfusion, which means that the hospital could not handle emergencies. We also know that the hospital was situated in a remote rural area. One of the major problems of health care in rural areas is the inadequate number of doctors, nurses, hospitals and clinics. Also, clinics and hospitals are often not built in places where people can get to them easily. This was clearly the situation with Mrs Mashamba – it took her four hours to get to the hospital. The lack of transport is another service that was lacking in the area where Mrs Mashamba's lived. Inadequate public transport makes it much more difficult for patients to get to hospitals and clinics. (This is a problem for people who live in urban areas also.)

(2) If we think about the impact of poverty and lack of employment in the rural areas, we can easily see why the people who live in rural communities suffer from poor health. Poor people cannot afford to eat enough food. In fact, they sometimes have no food to eat at all. So where there is poverty we can expect to find many cases of malnutrition. And malnutrition also means that children are more likely to contract diseases such as gastroenteritis, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

(3) We are told that Mrs Mashamba had had seven children, two of whom had died before they were five. In developing countries, many young children die before they reach the age of five. Some of the reasons for this are:

- inadequate *nutrition*
- lack of proper water and *sanitation*
- inadequate *immunisation* against major infectious diseases
- inappropriate *treatment* for common illnesses

All the problems we have mentioned – poverty, lack of services, inadequate nutrition and so on – can also be experienced by people who live in urban areas. If Mrs Mashamba had lived in an informal settlement, for example, her story would probably have ended in the same way. Your work as an ABET practitioner may take you into many areas, urban as well as rural, where people struggle to keep themselves and their children healthy. So you may well find that you will need to focus on health issues at some stage in your work.

(4) The purpose of the two posters in the hospital is to educate patients. The first poster uses illustrations of carrots to try to convey the idea of family planning. This poster is based on the belief that families in rural communities understand that plants which are placed close together do not grow well. How do you think people would interpret this poster? We think that people will understand the message of this poster better than they will understand what the AIDS poster says. You have to be literate, and you have to understand English, in order to understand the AIDS poster. We do not think that many people in this area can read English.

As an ABET practitioner, you will have to assess the effectiveness of the posters and materials that you use in your classes, and decide how suitable they are. We will deal with the **assessment** of materials in a later module. But it is a good idea, now, to start looking critically at all your teaching materials, and to decide whether or not they will be suitable for your particular learners.

(5) In order to answer this question, we compared Mrs Mashamba' situation with a more ideal health care situation. We think that it is possible that Mrs Mashamba's life could perhaps have been saved if:

- She had had access to family planning
- There had been enough blood for her transfusion
- The hospital had been better prepared to handle emergencies
- Mrs Mashamba had access to a more reliable system of transport
- She had access to health care during her pregnancy
- She had access to medical attention when she began bleeding two weeks earlier
- She had gainful employment and was economically better off

We are certain that if Mrs Mashamba had been educated, this would have made a tremendous difference to the quality of her life – it may even have saved her life!

The fact that Mrs Mashamba was illiterate draws our attention to the importance of education in health care. There are many areas in which education can make a difference to a community's health-care needs.

HOW DOES LITERACY AND ABET HELP IN HEALTH EDUCATION?

Lack of education makes it difficult for people to learn how they can keep themselves and their children healthy. This is where ABET can play a role, by educating about the following:

- ways of preventing and controlling health problems

- ways of improving the food supply and proper nutrition
- ways of getting an adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation
- maternal and child health care
- family planning
- immunisation against the major infectious diseases

(Alma Ata Declaration 1978)

Literacy and ABET directed specifically towards women

Many of the health problems we mentioned above are regarded as the health problems of women rather than men.

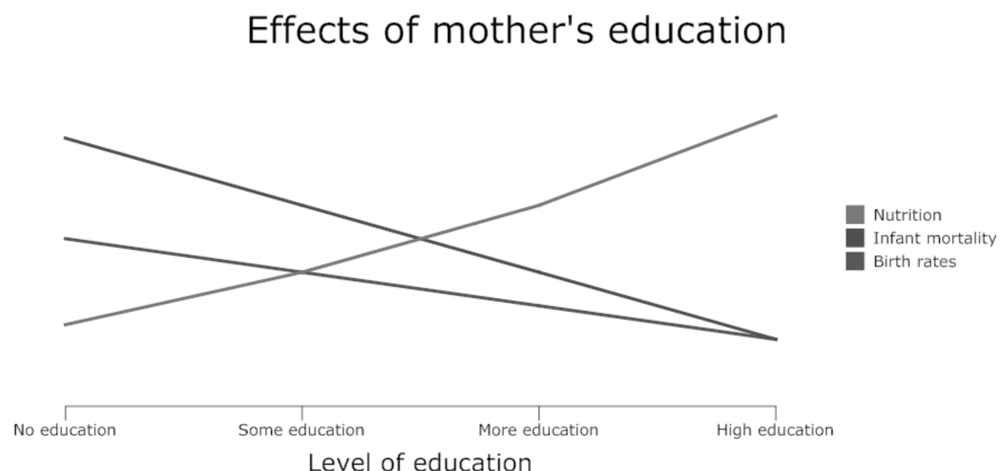
Education of mothers

Mothers are often referred to as the most important of all primary health-care workers. Educating mothers is therefore important not only for their own health, but also for the health of their families.

In what way is the education of the mother important for health care? The evidence (UNESCO 2005: 100,–101, 141–142) shows us this:

- The children of mothers with a basic education are less likely to die before they are five years old (ie lower infant mortality rate – “infant mortality” means the death of infants or children under five years of age).
- Women with a basic education are more likely to seek medical help for themselves and their children.
- Women with a basic education tend to use preventative health methods in their homes.
- They are better informed about how to prevent HIV/AIDS.
- They have a better understanding of any explanations and instructions given to them by doctors and/or nurses.
- They know more about family planning.
- They have fewer children.

The following graph indicates the relationship between the education of the mother and nutrition, birth rates (sometimes referred to as fertility rates) and infant mortality rates.



ACTIVITY 3

Study the graph above, which shows the effect of education on women in terms of

- level of nutrition
- number of births (fertility)
- infant mortality (death of babies or children under five)

Look carefully at the upward and downward trends. The upward trends show increases and the downward trends show decreases.

- What increases with education?
- What decreases with education?

Our response

The graph shows that educating girls and women contributes to higher (or *increased*) levels of nutrition. It also shows that education reduces (or decreases) the number of births and that it also reduces the number of babies who die before they are five years old (ie education contributes to lower infant mortality rates).

Studies have shown that the children of mothers with a basic education have a better chance of surviving until after the age of five because these mothers:

- are better able to care for their children
- know more about health, hygiene and nutrition
- are open to new ideas about child care
- know, for example, whether water should be boiled
- know when children should be vaccinated
- know how to space pregnancies

ACTIVITY 4

Write short notes on why you think education has these beneficial effects on health.

The answer seems to lie in the confidence that education gives a mother to deal with certain aspects of the modern world; it also enables her to take greater personal responsibility for the health of her children. A woman who has been educated also has more access to information on health care and family planning, and she will know where to find more information when she needs it. If we think of the problems outlined in the above case study, we are certain that, if Mrs Mashamba had had an education, she would have known where to obtain information about family planning. Education would also give mothers alternative ways of preventing malnutrition, which would lower the rate of infant mortality.

Family planning

Education gives women greater access to family planning information and services. We know from the case study that Mrs Mashamba did not want any more children, but she did not have access to information on family planning. Yet the "carrot poster" suggests that there were programmes for family planning at the hospital. Perhaps Mrs Mashamba's illiteracy was a crucial factor which contributed to her death. She could not read information on family planning or read signs or posters which would have told her where to get this information.

Family planning programmes have helped to improve the health of mothers and children. However, if Mrs Mashamba had had access to information on family planning, she would have been able to control the number of children she had. She would have been able to space her pregnancies and determine the size of her family. Family planning would also have enabled Mrs Mashamba to delay pregnancy until she felt she was healthy and strong enough to have a baby, and thus prevent high-risk or unwanted pregnancies. She would also have been in a better, more informed, position to discuss this issue with her husband, if necessary.

Globally, studies have shown that educating women increases their opportunities to participate in development. Also, from a national development perspective, education is likely to lead, eventually, to a significant reduction in the birth rate.

ACTIVITY 5

In what ways do you think education can lead to a lower birth rate? Rank the statements in the following list in the order of importance. In other words, "1" is the most important, "2" the next important and so on.

	Rank
Education improves women's self-confidence and makes them realise that motherhood is not the only role they have to play in society.	
Education gives women access to the outside world and makes it easier for them to get access to contraception.	
Education may lead to paid work. This, in turn, enables women to achieve some degree of economic independence and a measure of power in the family decision-making process.	
Education gives women greater access to family planning information and services.	
Education enables women to challenge husbands who do not want their partners to practise family planning.	

Teenage pregnancy

ABET can provide teenage girls with the life skills and information they need about family planning.

Although the case study about Mrs Mashamba does not refer to teenage pregnancies, early child-bearing has recently been defined as a social problem, and is widely recognised as such. Child-bearing by teenagers is regarded as causing problems for the mother, the baby and society

as a whole. In the developing world, teenage child-bearing often goes with a poorer quality of life for both the baby and the mother. It perpetuates the cycle of poverty, especially when it leads to interrupted schooling and dropping out of school. Teenagers who fall pregnant often experience serious problems when they give birth (problems associated with birth are called obstetric problems). In South Africa, many teenagers terminate pregnancies by means of legal and illegal abortions – (illegal abortions, in particular, are life-threatening procedures).

From what we have said, it is clear that schoolgirls need to be taught life skills and should learn about family planning. There should also be a family planning awareness in ABET classes – particularly those which are attended by teenagers.

WHAT ARE SOME BASIC HIV AND AIDS HEALTH EDUCATION ISSUES?

It is not easy to reach illiterate people about information on how to prevent HIV/AIDS. ABET can make an important contribution here also.

In the case study about Mengu Hospital, one of the posters inside the hospital warned people about AIDS. We said that we did not think it was an effective poster, simply because this sort of poster means nothing to illiterate people. AIDS education has become a very important component of adult education since AIDS was recognised as a worldwide epidemic. Although no one knows exactly how many people are infected with the AIDS virus, the infection rate appears to be increasing noticeably in developing countries.

Read the cartoon on the next page, taken from an AIDS awareness pamphlet produced by the Johannesburg City Health Department.

ACTIVITY 6

Now answer the following questions:

- Do you think Jack is aware of the problem of AIDS?
- Why is it necessary to distribute pamphlets on AIDS?
- Who are such pamphlets aimed at?
- How does illiteracy prevent people from understanding the problems of AIDS?
- What role can ABET play in informing people about AIDS?

Our response

Here are our answers to these questions. Compare them with your answers.

(1) We do not think that Jack is aware of the problem of AIDS. This makes the work of ABET practitioners and health workers all the more difficult.

DON'T WORRY JACK. THERE IS SOMETHING THAT CAN PROTECT US FROM GETTING THIS DISEASE.

WHAT'S THAT?
A CONDOM.

YOU REALLY ARE PLAYING GAMES! THAT'S A BALLOON!

LOOK HERE.

NO!... IT WILL PROTECT US FROM AIDS...

COME ON CINDY! STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH ME! LET'S GO TO BED.

I'M NOT HAVING SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
WHACK

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

SLAM!

(2) We think it is helpful to distribute pamphlets about AIDS to make people aware of the seriousness of AIDS, and inform them about the precautions they can take.
(3) & (4) We think that this particular pamphlet is aimed at literate people in urban areas. It would not be helpful in a traditional rural area, and, of course, of no use to an illiterate person.
(5) Your task as an adult educator is to make this kind of information available to your learners. You will have to remember that such topics may have to be treated with sensitivity. You must also carefully evaluate any materials you plan to use for your learners.

There are many reasons why illiterate people are not aware of AIDS, in spite of there being so much education about AIDS. Because they cannot read, they are excluded from much of the information available about AIDS. As a result, they often have to rely on rumours and "what people say". As you know, this sort of information is often seriously inaccurate or incomplete.

You may be confronted with the challenge of informing your learners about AIDS. If so, you could bring trained health workers into your classes to give them the information: as we have said already, you will need to treat this topic with tact and sensitivity.

According to estimates from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2008), some 33 million adults and 2 million children were infected with HIV at the end of 2007, some 2.7 million people having been infected in 2007 alone. During 2007 about 2 million people died from AIDS (although AIDS-related deaths were reduced among those receiving anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs therapy).

About 95% of those affected by HIV/AIDS live in developing countries and 67% live in sub-Saharan Africa. We can certainly regard South Africa as being a developing country, which means that a significant part of the population is likely to be infected with AIDS. The current estimate for South Africa is that about 6 million people (13% of the population) are infected with AIDS.

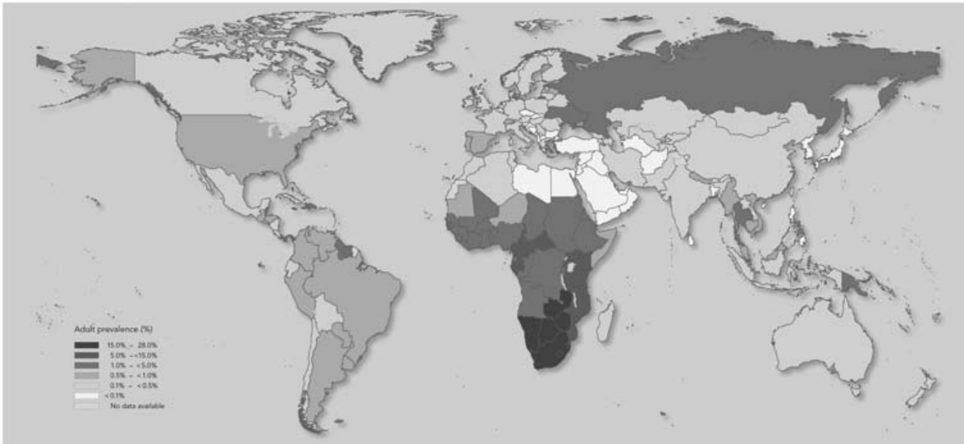
About half the people who are infected by HIV are infected before they turn 25 and usually die of AIDS before their 35th birthday. By the end of 2007, the epidemic had left behind 15 million AIDS orphans, who had lost one or both parents. These orphans often have to leave school to find work and/or to care for younger siblings or to head the family.

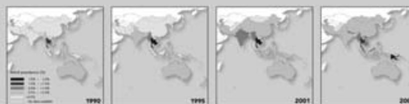
AIDS is a major health problem for both men and women. The problem of AIDS is worse in the rural areas because the facilities for diagnosis, treatment and control are usually very inadequate in these areas.

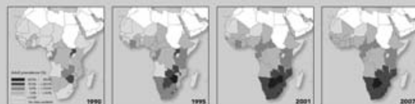
It is clear that AIDS is a massive disaster for Africa and, in particular, southern Africa. Why is the situation so much worse in developing countries and in Africa? A major reason is that people in the industrial world have better access to information about AIDS. The industrialised countries have conducted intensive education campaigns to ensure that their populations, which are predominantly literate, know all about AIDS and how to prevent it. We are certain that these campaigns have done much to combat AIDS in these countries. The challenge for developing countries is to have awareness and prevention campaigns that will be equally effective. Literacy and ABET educators can play an important part in such campaigns.

08 **A global view of HIV infection**

33 million people [30–36 million] living with HIV, 2007







UNAIDS

World Health Organization

It is clear that AIDS is a massive disaster for Africa and, in particular, southern Africa. Why is the situation so much worse in developing countries and in Africa? A major reason is that people in the industrial world have better access to information about AIDS. The industrialised countries have conducted intensive education campaigns to ensure that their populations, which are predominantly literate, know all about AIDS and how to prevent it. We are certain that these campaigns have done much to combat AIDS in these countries. The challenge for developing countries is to have awareness and prevention campaigns that will be equally effective. Literacy and ABET educators can play an important part in such campaigns.

There are three main reasons for AIDS education:

- To prevent new infections from taking place.
- To improve the quality of life for those already infected ("HIV positive") people.
- To reduce stigma and discrimination against HIV-positive people.

HEALTH, THE WORKPLACE AND ABET

If you look back at the pictures at the beginning of this Unit on page 68, you will notice that the fourth picture shows a worker wearing a helmet for protection. The picture draws our attention to health issues in the workplace. One does not always think of the work environment as being related to health but, in fact, many workers are exposed to occupational health hazards that can

have a serious effect on their health. Things such as unsafe machinery, dangerous chemicals, noise and stress are dangerous, and pose serious health problems.

ACTIVITY 7

What do you think makes the following kinds of work dangerous?

- working on a farm
- mining
- work in a steel factory
- transport driving
- commercial sex work (prostitution)
- health-care work

Our response

Here are just some of our responses:

- Too much noise in a steel factory or a mine, for example, can cause deafness.
- Exposure to infections, as in the case of a health worker or sex worker.
- Working underground is dangerous (explosions, accidents).

There are many other kinds of hazards in the workplace, such as:

- air pollution
- tiredness as a result of shift work or from long-distance driving
- exposure to chemicals, heat and humidity
- exposure to extreme cold (eg in the catering industry where people have to regularly enter freezer rooms)
- exposure to a range of hazards in the health-care industry, including chemicals, radiation and infections

Obviously, it is very important that workplaces are monitored, that hazards are identified and that changes and improvements are introduced to make the workplace safer. Great efforts have been made since 1994 to expand our occupational health services, and to emphasise the need to protect domestic workers, farm workers and even commercial sex workers.

ABET educators can help improve health in the workplace in three ways:

- By teaching about health and safety issues.
- Through improving literacy and education, thus enabling workers to read health materials, warnings and notices.
- Empowering workers to be more confident in raising issues (ie with management) about health and safety in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

We started the unit by reading the case study about Mengu hospital, where Mrs Mashamba died. It was apparent from the situation at Mengu hospital that health-care facilities in the rural areas of developing countries such as South Africa are woefully inadequate. As we studied this case, we

came to realise that Mrs Mashamba's problems had been made very much worse by her lack of education. ABET can play an important role in improving people's health, reducing the number of births and the number of infant mortalities. ABET could also give mothers better insight into nutritional needs and show them alternative ways of coping with the care of their children. We also looked at the increase in AIDS and we became aware that AIDS education tends not to reach illiterate people. This drew our attention to another area where ABET can make an important contribution. Finally, we concluded the unit by looking at the health hazards one encounters in the workplace.

As an ABET practitioner, you clearly have an important role to play in helping to improve the level of health in South Africa generally.

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STUDY UNIT 5

How does gender influence education?

INTRODUCTION

We hear a great deal about women's rights, women's empowerment, and so on. But what does all this mean? Why is there so much emphasis on women and their status? And why should you, as an ABET practitioner, have insight into the position and problems of women? Do men face any special problems?

The informed educator will ask himself (or herself) questions such as:

- How does the status of women differ from that of men?
- What kinds of problems do urban and rural women experience?
- What gender barriers prevent women (and men) from learning?
- How can ABET contribute to improving the position of women in South Africa?

AIMS OF THE UNIT

- To explore the interaction between gender and education and training

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Explain the interaction between gender and education (and training)

You will demonstrate that you can do this by

- describing common problems relating to the status of women
- identifying barriers to participation in education that specifically affect either women or men
- describing the benefits to be gained from educating women

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "GENDER"?

"Gender" refers to what a particular society considers to be characteristic of or appropriate to men or women – their different roles, behaviour, activities, status, etc.

Although "gender" as a term is now popularly used interchangeably with "sex" (the physical differences between men and women), strictly speaking, gender applies only to specifically **social** differences. Gender therefore also refers not only to the characteristics of women. It refers to the behaviour and social roles of both men and women.

The distinction between the terms "sex" and "gender" is important. Sexual differences in bodily form and brain functioning are relatively unchangeable. Gender, however, is changeable – different societies have very different ideas of what is means to be masculine or feminine and these ideas are taught and learned by members of those societies.

A good example of the extent to which gender roles are changeable was seen in the United States of America in the middle of the last century during the Second World War. Because men were away from the country fighting, a great deal of propaganda was put out to show that women could do male jobs in previously totally male-only work such as construction and shipbuilding. After the war, however, the reverse process happened: women were again told to stay at home and look after the home and children.

Paintings of "Rosie the riveter" used to recruit women for industrial jobs during the Second World War.

A woman working in a war factory

WHAT ARE THE GENDER BARRIERS THAT PREVENT BOTH WOMEN AND MEN FROM PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION?

As an ABET practitioner, many of your students will be women, so part of your task will be to deal with the issue of the women's inferior status in society. It is therefore important that you should be aware of the position and problems of women.

The status of women

The work that women do is often treated as being unimportant. Generally speaking, women are regarded as important in terms of bringing up children, caring for the family and other domestic duties. Men, on the other hand, are not nearly as involved in domestic duties. Their work is outside the home. In their working lives, they are usually associated with positions of authority and with the political life of the community as a whole. Their involvement in public or political affairs places them in positions where they can exercise power over community life. This power of men also extends to domestic life in the home, to the women in their homes, and to their communities. Notwithstanding certain gains in recent years, in many communities women are still relatively powerless.

If you look at the articles on the front page of a newspaper, or if you think about the discussion programmes on the radio or television, you will probably realise that they tend to feature men rather than women. This is just one of the things which tell us that men are still more powerful in our society than women. The fact is that most of the important political and economic decision-making positions are still held by men. Despite the many changes in South Africa, and the many more women in government, the "second-class" position of women has not really changed very much – women tend still to be excluded from positions of authority.

South Africa is, of course, not the only country where women are struggling to change their lives. Women all over the world are challenging the situations in their families and communities that keep them subordinate to men.

The United Nations has highlighted a significant fact about women: although women perform nearly two-thirds of the world's work, they receive only one-tenth of the world's income, and own only one-hundredth of the world's property.

The following case study is revealing. When you read the case study, focus on Nomsa's subordinate position in her community.

Case study

The men who live in Msinga are seated in a circle in an *inkunhla* under a tree. In this forum they are discussing community issues. The people of the village believe that these meetings are not places for women. In Msinga, as in most of the surrounding villages, women are not allowed to participate in traditional decision-making structures.

Nomsa, a female resident of Msinga, happens to be passing by at the time of the *inkunhla*. She stops and observes the men, who are in deep deliberation. She is standing among the trees, and the men cannot see her.

Although Nomsa has no voice in the village, she has many responsibilities, especially in her home. Her husband Sipho works and lives in Durban. He is a migrant labourer and returns at various times during the year. Nomsa looks after their three sons and their daughter. She also has to care for Sipho's elderly mother.

Because Nomsa has no formal education, she cannot get a job in the formal economy. She has no choice but to enter the informal sector. She earns very little money, but even so, it makes an important contribution to the running of her household. She is lucky that she can leave her two-year-old son with Sipho's mother.

Every day, after domestic duties, she sells vegetables at the nearby bus stop. There she meets up with many of the women from the area. Because there are no child care facilities in the village, many of the women take their children with them to the "business areas". Nomsa remembers when she used to take her children with her. They often used to eat food which they got from the other women who were involved in selling food.

She wishes that she knew how to sew or knit, because then perhaps she would be able to do more than sell vegetables at the bus stop. However, she thinks that selling vegetables is better than leaving her children to work as a domestic worker in town.

Although most of the women in the "business area" know how to count money, they lack the skills needed for budgeting and costing. Some women do not even know whether they are selling their goods at a profit or at a loss.

Nomsa has been lucky in her selling. She has been able to contribute to the running of her household. However, in spite of this, she has little self-confidence, and she does not feel proud of her abilities. In other words, she has a very low self-esteem. Nomsa was married by customary law and her marriage does not give her the same legal protection as a civil marriage. Customary marriages give women very few rights. "In fact", Nomsa explains, "Sipho can simply kick me out if he brings home a new civil wife".

One thing Nomsa is certain of is that she will make sure that her daughter is educated, because she has come to realise that educated women can fend better for themselves and their children. "I do not want my daughter to suffer as I do. She must be educated, even if I have to sacrifice everything", she says.

ACTIVITY 1

It is clear that Nomsa has many problems. Read the case study carefully again. Make a list of all the problems which Nomsa experiences.

Our response

Our list includes the following:

- Nomsa was not able to participate directly in the community's decision-making.
- She has very low self-esteem (no confidence).
- Because she lacks any formal education, it is almost impossible for her to get a proper job.
- She has to care for a large family on a small income.
- She feels insecure in her marriage.

Perhaps you identified additional problems that Nomsa (and the other women) experience.

The work and status of rural women

In spite of the fact that Nomsa can contribute to her family's income by selling vegetables, she has very few rights in the community. Like the other women in the area, she cannot participate in the decision-making, and takes few of the important decisions in her own home. Let us look more closely at the status of women like Nomsa, and how this influences the work they do.

Female-headed households

As we showed in Unit 2, men from rural communities tend to migrate to the cities in search of work and there is now an imbalance between the numbers of men and women in the urban and rural areas of South Africa. Women like Nomsa are often left behind to look after the children and the elderly people. They then also have to take responsibility for agricultural labour (eg ploughing) which the menfolk did before they migrated.

So, although Nomsa is married, she is actually the head of her household. In female-headed households, it is the women who look after the family while the husbands are away.

Nomsa is the head of the household; but she does not feel completely secure about her status as a married woman. She is worried that her husband may bring home a new wife one day. This is one of the problems that Nomsa has with her customary marriage. Women in customary marriages often feel insecure in their marriages.

Customary marriages

Central to any discussion of the situation of rural women is the controversial issue of polygamy (the traditional system whereby men have more than one wife). This issue arouses strong feelings among both men and women. Some rural women want the government to ban polygamy as well as the tradition that a widow is "inherited" by her brother-in-law if her husband dies, as is the case in some areas of KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

But many men do not want to change a practice which they believe is justifiable for economic and social reasons. They also argue that, because of the custom of loboloa (bride-price), such an "investment" should be kept in the family (and hence the husband's brother should "inherit" the wife).

The informal economy

Let us now look at Nomsa's job of selling vegetables at the local bus stop. In South Africa, people work either in the *formal economy*, or in the *informal economy* (this is also referred to as the *informal sector*). People who work in the formal economy have jobs with registered firms who pay taxes. Those who work in the informal economy, like Nomsa, belong to unofficial groups such as street vendors or small-scale market gardeners who generally do not pay taxes. The participation of women in the informal sector has contributed enormously to improving the living conditions of many families. Women who enter the informal sector tend to choose projects which they can undertake at home or near the home. They also prefer projects which they can combine with caring for their children or with their household activities (Sulliman 1991:121). The case study tells us that many of the mothers with whom Nomsa works combine their work (selling vegetables) with caring for their children.

The case study also tells us that many of Nomsa's friends lack the skills for managing their projects (eg some of them do not know whether they are making or losing money.) This draws

our attention to one of the most important contributions that ABET can make to developing women's income generating skills. ABET can enable women to manage their businesses better. Many South Africans would like to improve themselves economically and educationally, but they cannot even take the first step towards a better life because they do not have the basic education they need to get them started.

As we see with Nomsa, her lack of education limits her ability to enter into income-generating projects that are at all complex, or to expand her business to a level that will give her a better income. Problems such as lack of numeracy mean that women need to be trained to enable them to manage their businesses. The lack of any real education is a major obstacle to those who work in the informal sector. This is why education programmes need to combine basic education (focusing particularly on literacy and numeracy) with training in business skills (Sulliman 1991:167).

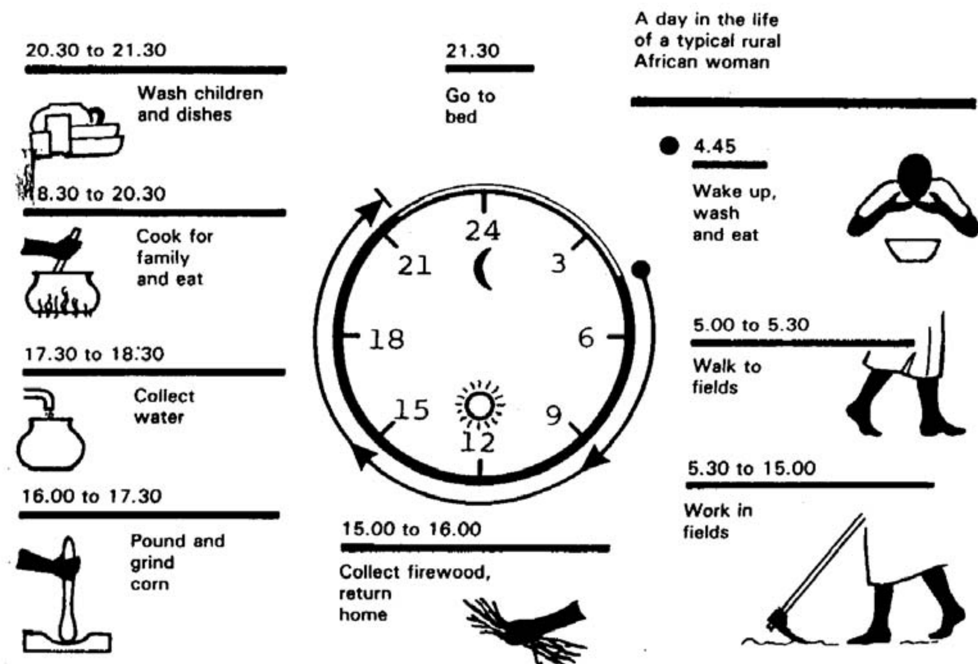
The working day of a rural woman

Nomsa actually does two jobs (selling vegetables and caring for her family), and this double workload adds to her hardships. For rural women, the pattern of never-ending work becomes part of their daily lives from early childhood.

The diagram below shows the working day of a typical rural woman.

ABET practitioners need to be aware of the kind of work women do in the rural areas and the hours they work, so that they can organise their classes accordingly. If you work in the rural areas, you will need to find ways of fitting your classes into schedules like those shown in the diagram above. As the diagram shows, women who are not formally employed are often as busy, if not busier, than women who have jobs in the formal sector.

The working day of a typical rural woman



Source: Morley & Lovel (1988:82)

ACTIVITY 2

Think about how you would organise ABET classes in a rural area (so that women could attend your classes).

Look at the diagram again. When do women have the most free time? When are they likely to be least tired? At what time of day would it be difficult for them to leave their families?

See whether you can think of three or four options which you could suggest to a group of women who want to attend ABET classes, and who have a work schedule like that in the diagram.

The work and status of urban women

In the urban areas, the situation of women is different in some respects. Indeed, research indicates that urban women have a better quality of life than rural women. If they are married, they are more likely to be living with their husbands, or they will at least see their husbands more frequently. In the cities, civil marriage tends to be more common than customary marriage.

A great deal of research examining the connection between working women and fertility has been conducted over the years. Most of this research supports the view that urban working women tend to have fewer children, have more authority and an overall higher quality of life than rural women.

However, as in the rural areas, urban women carry a double burden. By this we mean that, although men and women work equally long hours, women's work continues when they arrive home. That is, they continue with housework and other chores. Do you think this is typical of most households you know?

We shall now look at the type of work urban women normally do in more detail.

The formal economy

More and more women are now working in the formal economy, but an important point which you should note is that the highest concentration of women workers are found in poorly paid, routine jobs. In recent years, South African women have started to move into jobs which were previously seen as men's work, but this does not mean that, in practice, men and women are treated as equals in the workplace. Widespread beliefs about the kind of work women should be "allowed" to do will still have to change considerably. Even in highly developed countries, where women make up nearly half the paid labour force, women occupy only a relatively small percentage of the higher managerial positions, and they own relatively few businesses.

However, thousands of urban women cannot find employment in the formal economy even though they live in cities, or in townships near a city. These women may sell vegetables, just like Nomsa, but on the city pavements or in the streets of the township. Or they may be employed as domestic workers.

Women and domestic work

Domestic work is often spoken of as an unnoticed area of work, in the sense that only recently have there been regulations about minimum wages. Many middle class South African women avoid having to do domestic work by employing domestic labour. Most of the people they employ are African women. For most of these women, domestic labour means that they spend long hours away from their families, and that when they go home, they have to do the domestic tasks there as well.

Women and education

Globally, women tend to be less well educated than men.

We have seen from the case study that, because of her own difficult circumstances, Nomsa is determined that her daughter will get an education – regardless of the sacrifices that she has to make. Nomsa's opinions about educating her daughter are rather unusual. Most societies, whether they are traditional or modern, consider that boys rather than girls will be the breadwinners (the main supporters of the family) when they grow up. Because parents believe that their sons will play the more important roles in their communities, they generally favour education for boys above education for girls. Parents will usually make more sacrifices to ensure their sons will get an education. In addition, girls are often expected to help with household tasks and to care for small children. It is not uncommon for parents to believe that education for girls is not really necessary. And many parents are unwilling to spend money on girls when they believe that "boys will be the breadwinners of tomorrow". Even "free" education is expensive when parents are too poor to afford books, clothes, shoes and transport.

In South Africa, the education gap between men and women is not as great as it is in many other developing countries. The reasons for this are complex and include the influence of early missionary educators (who believed in educating both boys and girls) and because the colonial and apartheid migrant labour system encouraged older boys to leave school before completing their schooling in order to work in industry or elsewhere – particularly in the mining sector.

Interestingly, where there is genuine legal and social equality, women tend to achieve even better educational results than men.

Education and teenage pregnancy

In unit 4, we discussed the issue of teenage pregnancies in terms of its impact on young women's health. We said that poverty and a lack of education contributes to the pattern of teenage pregnancies (Mostert & Lotter 1990:82). An excerpt from the life history of a young mother living in a poor home highlights this dramatically:

I left school when I was in standard four because my father lost his job and could not pay the school fees any more. I just stayed at home because nobody wanted me to work for them. But I got very lonely and had nothing to do. Then I saw how nice it was for my friend to have a baby. It was a little girl and she wore nice dresses and people stopped my friend and said what a nice baby. So I thought why shouldn't I have a baby too? Maybe my boyfriend will marry me when he loves the baby . . . Well it is nice even though that my boyfriend has left me, but it is hard to feed my baby and buy her everything (Mostert & Lotter 1990:39).

Barriers to the education of men

One must not think that educational barriers only apply to women. Why, for example, are literacy classes predominantly attended by women? The same situation applies to ABET classes in public adult learning centres and those run by NGOs.

Some of these barriers relate to the economy and migrant labour, some have to do with how many men see themselves.

Many young males are expected to seek work to help support their families rather than continue their schooling. In traditional rural areas, boys may be expected to take care of cattle (which means that they miss school).

But the other social factors may be more important as barriers. Many men do not want to be embarrassed or humiliated by other men if they attend literacy or ABET classes, particularly when these may be seen as "a place that women go to". Overcoming these barriers is extraordinarily difficult since the man's self-esteem and social status are at stake.

Other problems that women face

In this section, we shall pay attention to two of these problems – abuse and violence.

South Africa today has one of the highest incidences of rape in the world. Domestic violence, abuse and child molestation are also becoming increasingly common. Women live with the constant fear of attack. (Note that this may well influence attendance at literacy or ABET classes in the evenings, especially if there is little in the way of public transport.)

But it is not just in the streets or public places that women are in danger. For many women, their own homes are not safe places. It has been said that, in South Africa, most wives experience some form of abuse. (This figure includes non-physical forms of abuse, such as emotional abuse.) Domestic violence is often believed to involve only minor injuries but, in fact, evidence shows that many women receive appalling injuries from the men they live with.

ACTIVITY 3

Why do abused South African women tend to remain in the abusive relationship rather than leave?

Think about this.

What would you do? What do you think an abused woman should, or could, do?

Compare your own ideas with what we say below.

The legal position of women whose husbands abuse them has improved, but it is still difficult for these women to get the protection of the law. The police normally follow a policy of non-intervention in these cases, which they regard as "domestic disputes". When they are called out in such circumstances, they tend to restrict their intervention to calming down the people involved, rather than pressing charges.

Putting aside the lack of legal protection, women in violent relationships (abusive relationships) often find it difficult to leave the household for a variety of economic and social reasons, including their responsibility to the children.

WHAT SPECIAL BENEFITS ARISE FROM THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN?

The term "empowerment" is frequently used these days in the media, in political speeches and in everyday life. What does it mean? How do women, in particular, become "empowered" (in other words, gain more power)?

Some people believe that South African women can become empowered by challenging the division of work according to gender, and by challenging men's domination of women.

Others believe that one of the most effective ways of empowering women is through education. ABET practitioners need to be trained in sensitivity to these issues (ie to gender issues), and they need to be trained so that they can help women to challenge their social status (Walters 1994:116).

ACTIVITY 4

What are the "tools" for empowerment? What changes can we make to empower women?

The following is a list of some of the ways in which women can become empowered. Are some of these more important than others? Rank the list in the order of importance ("1" as the most important, "2" as the next most important etc).

Jobs in the formal economy	
Education and more skills	
Literacy and numeracy	
Dismantling traditions that treat women as minors and inferiors	
Changes in the law to make men and women equal	
Birth control and contraception	
Improving women's self-confidence	
Giving women more say in political decisions	

Would you exclude any of these? Would you add more to this list?

Why is it important to target women for literacy and ABET?

The South African government gives a lot of emphasis to the position of women in South Africa, and refers repeatedly to "women's rights". These policies are based on the principle of a "non-sexist society". One of the ways of countering women's subordination to men is by targeting women for ABET and thus opening up opportunities and choices for women. Various education policies and statements stress that any literacy and adult basic education and training programme should give special emphasis to women.

The education of women is important not only for the women themselves, but also because women, as mothers, are the most important influences on the health and education of their own children and of their families. (See our earlier remarks and the case study about Nomsa.)

Better educated women tend to be able to increase their family's income and evidence from a large number of countries shows that literacy and adult basic education for women has a positive effect on the economic development of the country (because it leads to a lower birth rate and increased family incomes). The case study tells us that Nomsa would like to acquire the job skills that would enable her to generate a better income, and ABET could certainly play an important role in training women to acquire such skills.

Education empowers women to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their community and enables them to become aware of the options open to them. In the case of Nomsa, this would mean that she would feel she had the right to participate in the decision-making processes of the community – rather than hide in the shadow of a tree, watching the men make all the decisions.

Empowering women in rural areas

The following is a summary of the demands stated in the Land Charter's section on women, entitled "The Land Charter and Women" (Community Land Conference 1994:13):

- Women should be able to own land whether they are married or single. Women and men should have the same rights to land. Married couples should have their house registered in the names of both spouses.
- There should be no discrimination against women in inheritance rights.
- Women should benefit from development programmes and be targeted for training. There should be special training centres and adult education courses for women.
- Women living on farms must have secure places to live.
- There should be special housing subsidies for women who cannot afford to buy houses or pay rent. Housing subsidies must be introduced to assist women who are single parents.
- There should be a ministry of women's affairs, with offices in every local government office and in each region, to ensure that women's rights are protected.
- Land must be set aside for community facilities that benefit women, such as crèches, community gardens and women's training centres. There should be regional or local health-care workers.
- There should be sufficient schools in all areas. There must be free and compulsory education for children, and sufficient sports fields.
- Women want to have places to go if they – or their children – are abused.

IN CONCLUSION

This unit has focused on the position of women in contemporary South Africa. We started by looking at some of the domestic tasks that women do, and we asked why these tasks are regarded as being appropriate for women, but not for men. We then considered the hardships of women in rural areas, especially those who are the heads of their households. We used the case study of Nomsa to highlight some of these problems. We looked at women's involvement in the informal economy in the urban as well as the rural areas, and we showed that ABET can be useful in helping women to expand their businesses and to improve their income-generating skills. We saw that ABET could also make an impact on the rate of teenage pregnancies. We discussed some of the things which could make women's attendance at ABET classes difficult, such as their work schedules and the possibility that they might not feel safe enough to attend classes at night. Violence in the home, and the difficulty women experience in leaving an abusive relationship, are among the many problems women have to deal with. The unit concluded by looking at suggestions for improving the situation of women as set out in the Land Charter of 1994.

FURTHER READING

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STUDY UNIT 6

What is the relationship between work, the economy and ABET?

INTRODUCTION

People working in unskilled jobs need literacy and general education to help them remain employed and improve their chances of finding better paying work. You probably know that trade unions, other stakeholders in industry and new laws and policies have all helped to make industry-based training more available and more transferable. However, adult learners still have to overcome many difficulties before they can participate in a training programme. In this unit, we will look at how ABET can help working people to be more productive, overcome the problems of unemployment, and generally cope with urban life.

AIMS OF THE UNIT

Attempt to answer the following questions:

- What kind of problems are experienced by people at work?
- What work-related problems do women experience?
- What prevents working people from participating in ABET training?
- What makes an industry-based programme successful?
- How can ABET alleviate unemployment?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

Describe and explain the situation of workers and the influence of the economy on adult basic education and training.

You will demonstrate you can do this by

- stating the typical problems facing people at work
- describing the things that prevent working people from participating in adult basic education and training
- describe typical industry adult basic education and training programmes
- explaining how adult basic education and training can help to alleviate unemployment

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY WORKING PEOPLE?

Your first task for this unit is to read the following case study very carefully. Much of what we are going to discuss in this unit is based on this case study.

Case study 1

When Mandla Dlamini moved to Johannesburg from Swayimani in KwaZulu-Natal, he and his wife Fikile went to live in an informal settlement. Mandla was lucky – in the end, he found a job. He had to struggle for a long time to find work, but eventually a cousin of his told him about a job at a steel factory near Isando. In his first month at the steel factory, Mandla travelled more than forty kilometres to work and back each day. In order to get to work on time, he had to leave home before five o'clock each morning and, if he worked overtime, which he often has to do because his basic wage is so low, he would only arrive home after ten o'clock at night.

So Mandla decided that it would be better for him to stay at a hostel on the East Rand, because it was closer to his work. He had heard about the conditions in the hostels, but it was still a shock to him to find so many men accommodated in the hostel. There were some very old men – almost as old as his father. They had been living in hostels for nearly 30 years, going home only at Christmas. Mandla thought about the families of these old men and then about Fikile. "How awful," he thought, "to only see your wife for thirty months in thirty years".

One of the things Mandla noticed at the hostel was that some of the men attended literacy classes, which were held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. He wondered whether the classes would help him learn more about life in the city. He also wondered whether, if he attended the classes, he would be able to get a better job.

"Do not waste your time there", said Mr Maseka, one of the hostel dwellers, "they cancel the classes every time somebody wants to use the room for something else. And when they do give you your lesson, people come and interrupt all the time. There is so much noise that you cannot concentrate on anything. In any case, even if you can read and write, you will not get a promoted. And if you change jobs, at the next place they will still tell you that you did not go to school because you do not have a proper certificate".

However, despite Mr Maseka's remarks, Mandla decided that he would attend classes – he wanted to be able to write letters home and read his payslip. In April he had attended an AIDS awareness class at the factory, and just before the 2009 elections, he attended a voter education class. He had enjoyed these classes, and he hoped he would learn more if he went to classes regularly.

One Monday evening, although he was tired from working in the factory. Mandla decided to join the literacy class. He was on his way to the class when he met a few young men at the classroom door. They began to laugh at him, saying that he was silly because he had to go back to school. Mandla felt very humiliated and so he returned to his room. "Oh well", he thought, "I suppose I am too old to learn".

In the factory, Mandla works with more than 500 workers. Working in the factory is unpleasant – there is a lot of loud noise, and a strong smell of chemicals in the air. It is also very hot from the furnace. Mandla often has a headache and his throat and lungs are sore by the afternoon. He looks at the other men who have been working in that factory for years and years, and he wonders why they did not find other jobs.

He asks Mr Maseka about it. “The truth is”, Mr Maseka tells him, ”they cannot leave because they have no skills and they will not be able to find other jobs, especially at their age. Some of the men would like to become apprentices and go for training on learnerships. But they are not able to because they cannot read and write. And so they will not be able to get better jobs. What can they do? They just stay, and they are happy that they have not been retrenched.”

ACTIVITY 1

Read case study1 again. It refers to a number of problems that are related to work and working life.

Compile a list of the problems that factory workers like Mandla Dlamini and Mr Maseka experience.

Our response

Here is our list:

- low wages
- workplace far away from home
- inadequate transport
- being apart from your family
- living in a hostel
- long working hours
- lack of education
- hard physical labour
- unpleasant working conditions in the factory
- prejudice against people trying to improve their education
- little reward from employers for improving your education
- poor facilities for literacy and adult education

ACTIVITY 2

Look at our list again (we have set it out for you again below).

How serious do you think these problems are for Mandla Dlamini and other workers at the factory?

Rank the list in order of importance If you thought of some additional problems that are not included in our list, write them in before you do the ranking from 1 (most serious) to less serious.

Problem	Ranking
low wages	
workplace a long way from home	
inadequate transport	
being apart from your family	
living in a hostel	

Problem	Ranking
long working hours	
lack of education	
hard physical labour	
unpleasant working conditions in the factory	
prejudice against people trying to improve their education	
little reward from employers for improving your education	
poor facilities for literacy and adult education	
Add any extra problems you thought of here:	

WHAT CAN EDUCATION DO TO SOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN THE WORKPLACE?

It seems obvious that better education would be helpful to most workers. Generally, the more literate and educated you are, the more likely you will end up in a better job.

A person who is literate and who has a good basic education will have a better understanding of a wide range of workplace activities and issues. An educated person will know more about their rights in the workplace and about the laws and regulations that control workplaces, employers and companies.

However, the most important thing here is that literacy and a basic education make you more trainable. Nearly all forms of modern workplace training assume that the trainees are literate and numerate. If you are literate, you can read training material, notices and so forth. You can simply find out more (ie gain more knowledge). You can obtain information from manuals, books, and libraries. You can begin learning how to use a computer and then get access to the internet.

Even highly skilled workers (eg motor car mechanics) need to be able to read and write – because they have to order spare parts, fill in reports and worksheets, write quotes for repairs, etc.

Because the modern workplace changes constantly, all employees have to be able to learn new things quickly – and a basic education (and, of course, secondary and even higher education) makes it easier to cope with this situation.

Apart from education that is directly work-related, a basic education gives working people a better quality of life. A well-educated person will know more about health and how to care for himself or herself (and his or her family). An educated person can help his or her children with homework and give them other forms of support. And, lastly, a basic education helps the person to better understand the political and economic forces that influence his or her life and thus become an informed and confident citizen.

WHAT STOPS WORKING PEOPLE FROM PARTICIPATING IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

ACTIVITY 3

The first case study also tells us about some of the problems workers such as Mandla encounter when they attend ABET classes. Read case study 1 again, and look at what Mr Maseka tells Mandla about the classes at the hostel. Take a look, as well, at what happens when Mandla decides to join the classes. Highlight or underline the problems that are mentioned in connection with the classes.

Problems of attending adult education classes

We identified the following problems associated with the adult literacy classes in case study 1. Compare these with the points you underlined.

Unsuitable venues

Mr Maseka begins by warning Mandla about the noise in the hostel. This brings us to a problem which you will have to consider when you plan a literacy or ABET programme. Choosing a venue is not always easy. In Mandla's case, perhaps it was not possible to find a quieter place for the classes at the hostel. We wonder, however, whether it was not possible for these classes to be held in the training centre or conference room at the factory. On the other hand, if the classes are held in the evenings, the workers might not have the transport to get to the factory at night. Transport to and from the venues is one of the most common and difficult problems for people who want to attend ABET classes. In fact, the problem of transport affects the attendance at most adult education programmes. Many cities and towns lack reliable public transport and, in many places, taxis do not usually run later than 6 o'clock in the evenings.

It is important to find an appropriate venue for ABET classes.

Lack of certification

Another problem that Mr Maseka brings up is that if Mandla goes to the classes, he may not get a certificate or any formal accreditation, no matter how hard he works.

There is certification for ABET, but the full General Certificate in Education and Training is obtainable only at the end of ABET Level 4. To get that far it takes several years of study (it is the equivalent of school Grade 9).

Learners studying through Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) (and some industry sites are registered as such) can write Department of Education examinations.

There are also examinations available through the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) at the following ABET levels and learning areas (and in the following languages (in 2009)):

Level	Learning areas	Languages
ABET 1	Communication	English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu
	Numeracy	
ABET 2	Communication	English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu
	Numeracy	
ABET 3	Communication in English	English
	Mathematical literacy	
ABET 4/ NQF 1	Communication in English	
	Economic and Management Sciences	
	Human and Social Sciences	
	Life orientation	
	Mathematical literacy	
	Natural Sciences	
	Small, medium and micro enterprises	
	Technology	

Failure to be given a recognised certificate often demotivates adult learners. Furthermore, any certification must be recognised by all employers. It is unjust for an employer to give out a certificate that is of no value elsewhere.

The problem of transferability

Mr Maseka also tells Mandla that if he changes jobs his next employer will not give Mandla recognition for what he has learnt. This is particularly problematic for workers who do skills development courses offered by the companies they work for. These courses are often very narrow, and focus on skills required in a specific plant or factory. In addition, the classes are usually job oriented, so that workers are taught how to perform particular tasks, but without any conceptual or theoretical understanding of the tasks. These specialised skills are usually not transferable – in other words, they may well not apply to another job or another workplace.

Attending classes after work

The first case study tells us that Mandla was tired on the evening that he planned to attend the class at his hostel. This is a problem that many workers experience. How can this problem be solved? One way would be to hold classes early in the day (before work starts) or for workers to have paid time off so that they can attend ABET classes. Some companies give one hour of paid class time for every hour that a worker spends in class. There are many ways in which classes are organised in industry. One problem is that management may agree to workers having time off for study, but then a worker finds his or her immediate supervisor is not willing to release him (or her).

ACTIVITY 4

Speak to a few workers who are attending literacy or ABET classes, or to any of your friends or family who work in industry, and try to find out what arrangements their companies make for ABET classes.

Ask the following questions:

- When do they have classes?
- Who teaches them?
- What do they learn?
- Is there a learners' committee?
- Who is responsible for arranging the classes?
- Who was involved in negotiating with the company (ie for the classes)?

"Too old to learn"

Mandla decided against attending class. He told himself that he was too old to learn. This was partly brought about by the other men in the hostel who laughed at him. Adult learners often mention how humiliating it is when neighbours, youth and others mock them for returning to school. Here is a letter written by an adult who attends classes at the Wits Workers' School. He also says that, at first, he thought he was too old to learn.

My experience as an adult learner

By Nompi Mabatha

In 1991, my friends at work told me that there is a school for adults who cannot read or write. Although by then I had finished school at Grade 4, I was shy to tell them that I also wanted to go and learn. I have always wished that I was educated, but when I thought of attending a class at the age of 37, this made me fearful. What made this worse is that my child was at Grade 10 by then.

However, with encouragement from my child and my friends at work, I finally decided to give it a try. I found out that there was no point in being shy because we all learn for a purpose. Although I struggled at first, I am now comfortable and can read and write English easily.

(Literacy Link 1994)

Motivation for attending ABET classes

What was it that motivated the writer of this letter to attend classes? We know that there are many things which motivate adults to attend ABET classes. For example, urbanisation is a strong motivating factor for Mandla. Why are people in urban areas motivated to become literate? Mandla says that he would like to write letters home, read his own payslip and learn more about living in the city. In the cities people from the rural areas, like Mandla, have to cope with street signs, notices, forms and other printed media. Simply drawing money from an automatic teller in the city requires good English reading skills.

There are many jobs where you cannot be promoted unless you can read and write fluently. Employees have to be able to read and understand reports, job cards, and written instructions and directions.

Trade unions have long argued that ABET should not concentrate only on reading and writing, but should also provide a more general education. They say that adult education should be linked to vocational training and promotion prospects in the workplace. This is another issue that Mr Maseka raises in the case study, but Mr Maseka also points out to Mandla that many workers have problems with being trained or being accepted into learnerships because they cannot read and write. So reading and writing are essential; however, we agree: they should form part of a broader programme.

BARRIERS THAT PARTICULARLY AFFECT WOMEN

What about Fikile? We know that she joined her husband in the city. How is she coping with city life? Read the case study below to find out about some of the problems women may have in the workplace.

Case study 2

Fikile has found a job in Pretoria. Now that Mandla is living at the hostel, she has moved to Winterveld, where she shares a shack with some relatives. Many of the women in the area are involved in some kind of informal income generation project.

Fikile realises that if she learns to read and write, this will help her to find her way around in the city and maybe get a better job.

Three times a week, Fikile goes to a literacy campaign class at a nearby Catholic church where she is learning to read and write. She is also learning how to sew. Fikile used to be able to read, but after she left school when she was nine, there was never any need to read. In any case, she did not have any books to read at home, and so she forgot how to read.

Fikile goes to her classes in the evenings because she cannot get time off from work. She is employed as a cleaner in an office block in town.

She was very upset and shocked when one of the supervisors tried to get her to have sex with him. He told her he would give her an increase in pay if she went to bed with him. She did not know what to do. She was too afraid to tell Mandla. And if she told anyone at work, the supervisor would make sure that she was fired. She did not want to lose her job. By now she knew how difficult it is to find work.

Eventually she decided to ask her literacy educator what she should do.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a problem faced by many women. Fikile is too afraid to tell anyone about her problem because she thinks that she may be fired. This is typical of the many women who are harassed in the workplace. Fikile's problem is made worse by the fact that she cannot find another job. As a woman, she will find it even more difficult than her husband to find another job. Even if she could find another job, it seems that women earn less money than men for doing the same work as men do.

In what way can ABET classes help women to deal with harassment in the workplace?

ACTIVITY 5

If you were Fikile's teacher, what advice would you give her? This is a good question to discuss with other learners. Make notes of all the things you could suggest to Fikile.

You can see that there is no easy answer to this question. Although there is legislation that prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace, there is still a great need for education programmes to make workers and employers more aware of the issue. Women should also be made aware of how to lodge complaints. Perhaps this is one of the things that Fikile's teacher could discuss with her.

Women are expected to bear a double burden of work

Because women are still expected to be responsible for various domestic duties, working women have a double burden. They have to cope with two jobs. When they get home, they must still cook, do the washing and clean the house. Like their husbands, women have to leave home early in the morning to get to work on time. But their work does not end when they go home in the evening, because that is when the "second job" begins.

ACTIVITY 6

Ask a few women what they think about having to come home and do the household tasks in the evenings.

Now ask a few married men what they think about this. Do men and women agree on this issue?

You may find that men and women have very different views about this; you are also likely to discover that many men have simply never thought about the double burden carried by the women they are married to.

WHAT DO TYPICAL INDUSTRY ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES DO?

ABET in the workplace

In case study 1 we saw that Mandla wanted to join an ABET class, but that he felt he was too old to go back to school. In case study 3 we continue with Mandla's story. He still wants to learn, so he talks to Jabu, a shop steward at the steel factory where he works.

Case study 3

Mandla tells Jabu that now that he is living in the city, he really needs to become literate. Also, he says, he wants to learn to read and write so that he can help his son with his homework.

Jabu takes Mandla to the training centre at the factory, where he introduces Mandla to Sipho Gumede, the training officer. Sipho tells Mandla that he will first have to be to be assessed so that he can be placed in the correct class.

Sipho also tells Mandla that he will be able to attend classes during the day, but that his supervisor must be informed. Later, if Mandla wishes, he could put his name forward to join the learners' committee and eventually, perhaps, he could join a more advanced industrial training programme. Mandla is very happy about all of this.

In case study 3 we see that things are improving for Mandla as far as his ABET classes are concerned. It is more convenient for him to attend classes at the training centre, and he will get time off from work, so he will not have to study when he is tired out (ie at the end of the working day). There is also the chance that he can go on to more advanced industrial training later on.

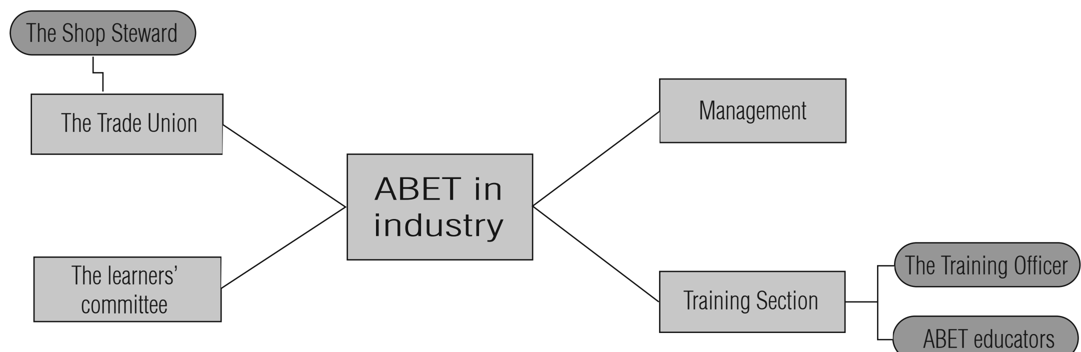
Note that there are a number of people who are involved, in some way, with the ABET classes.

ACTIVITY 7

Re-read case study 3 carefully, and make a list of all the people who have some sort of interest in the ABET classes. Try to show their involvement in the form of a diagram rather than writing a simple list (see below for our diagram).

Our response

Our diagram looks like this:



Why are so many people involved in this training programme? In fact, it is usual for a number of stakeholders to be involved in any industrial training programme. Each specific person in the programme Mandla plans to join has a function.

The shop steward and the trade union have played an important role in motivating management to present ABET courses. The trade unions argue that they should have a central role in planning, implementing and monitoring training programmes. This is where the learners committee comes in.

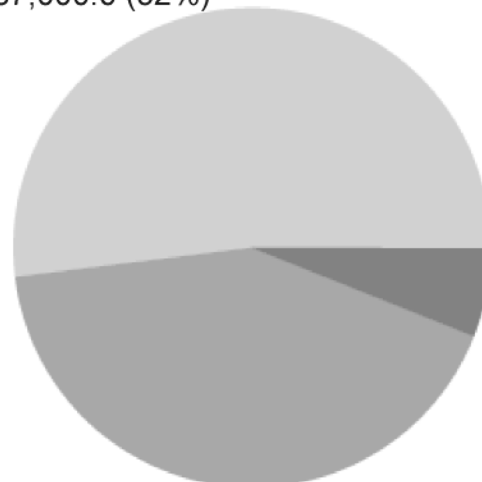
The trade unions have also asked employers to give employees paid time off to attend courses. They also want employers (and the state) to provide facilities for classes, and to help pay ABET teachers' salaries. It is obvious, then, that management also has to be one of the stakeholders in industrial training programmes – and in ABET. Apart from the fact that the cooperation of management is a vital factor, management will also benefit from programmes such as the one Mandla plans to join. The supervisor also has an interest, because if Mandla is away from work attending classes, he will have to rearrange the work schedule.

Then we have the ABET practitioner who teaches the learners.

You can see that Sipho has to communicate with all the different stakeholders. He has to make sure that they all play their part, and fulfil their obligations. If he fails to do this, the programme is unlikely to be a success. Many companies get their stakeholders to sit on a special ABET committee. Learners themselves are often nominated onto such a committee.

In 2000 it was estimated that the business sector provided about 45% of all ABET provision in South Africa.

ABET provision by business sector: 2000



HOW CAN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING HELP REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT?

We are told in case study 1 that Mandla looked for work for a very long time before he was finally lucky enough to get a job. This tells us that there is a shortage of employment in the urban areas.

ACTIVITY 8

We probably all know someone who is unemployed, or who at some time found it difficult to find a job. Speak to one or two people who you know are looking for work.

Try to find out:

- How long they have been looking for work
- How they manage to live without an income
- Whether they are involved in any informal sector activities

Think about what unemployed people can do to generate an income. What would you do if you could not find a job? Write down as many ideas as you can think of.

Ask yourself how you would feel about yourself, and about life in general, if you could not find employment.

Overcoming the problems of unemployment

There is a shortage of jobs in South Africa and this situation has been made even worse by the global recession that started in late 2008. People migrate from the rural areas to the cities to try and find work. Some people try to generate an income by working in the informal sector. Unemployment is a big problem for our youth, as well.

The obvious way to address the problem of unemployment is to create more jobs but this, in itself, depends on the resources available and the state of the economy.

The government can intervene by establishing special programmes to create jobs or by giving companies job-creation incentives.

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) is an example of one attempt to create jobs (Department of Public Works, 2009). The EPWP was set up to create additional work opportunities for a minimum of one million people (at least 40% women, 30% youth and 2% disabled) in South Africa between 2004 and 2009. The EPWP includes an education and training component to enable people to acquire the skills they need to obtain employment (which includes becoming self-employed).

ACTIVITY 9

- How can ABET help people to generate an income?
- Think about ABET classes you have read about or know about.
- What ideas did you think of for generating an income?

- What skills would be needed?
- Make a list of the skills that an ABET practitioner could teach, which would help unemployed people to earn some money.

CONCLUSION

In this unit we focused on some of the problems experienced by people at work. Many of these problems are associated with workers' living conditions, such as having to live away from their families or having to travel long distances to work each day. We mentioned some of the working conditions, such as high noise levels and the constant smell of chemicals.

We saw that industry-based courses are part of a wider network involving the trade unions and management, and that the ABET practitioner is the link between the worker and the various other stakeholders. Finally, we considered how the problems of women workers are exacerbated and how ABET teachers need to be aware of the specific problems experienced by women who work in the formal economy.

REFERENCES

Department of Public Works. 2009. Expanded Public Works Programme. [Website] http://www.epwp.gov.za (Accessed 3 April 2009)

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